THE

CHRISTIAN OFFICER's PANOPLY:

[Price THREE SHILLINGS sewed.]

Entered at Stationers Hall.

1019.e.28

K 11-F.6

THE

CHRISTIAN OFFICER'S PANOPLY:

CONTAINING

ARGUMENTS

IN FAVOUR OF A

DIVINE REVELATION.

BY

A MARINE OFFICER.

WITH

A RECOMMENDATION

IN FAVOUR OF THE WORK,

By Sir RICHARD HILL, Bart.

London:
PRINTED BY T. BENSLEY,
FOR JAMES MATHEWS, No. 18, STRAND.
MDCCLXXXIX.

6

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

PREFACE.

The following arguments, in favour of a divine revelation, were first collected for the information of my own judgment, and establishment in the faith of the gospel; but, having with regret beheld, during the course of a long service, how easily many of my brother officers, men of good sense and of a liberal education, were *stormed* or *surprised* out of their religion by their deistical companions, merely from an ignorance of the solid arguments the cause of truth had to furnish

furniſh them with; I was led, from this weighty conſideration, to think of publiſhing, for the uſe of the officers in the army and navy, what I had found ſo beneficial to myſelf; attempting it in a ſtyle and manner familiar to their profeſſion: having a hope that, in ſuch a dreſs, it might not only engage their attention, but prove in the iſſue conduſive to the promoting of their eternal intereſts: that thoſe among them (and I hope there are many) who have juſt ſentiments of religion, and wiſh to retain them, might here find ſufficient weapons to defend themſelves againſt the daily attacks of military deiſts and infidels, who are but too numerous in that line, and too ſucceſsful in gaining proſelytes to their party.

Many more weighty arguments might have been urged, and thoſe advanced greatly enlarged on; but then one great

evil

evil must have unavoidably ensued; this small volume would have increased in size; and a large book on a serious subject would have deterred most military men from looking into it: daily observation having convinced me, that a British officer had much rather attack half a dozen armed men, than a body of divinity consisting of as many volumes. This, I am well persuaded, has occasioned many valuable books on religious subjects to lose great part of their usefulness; particularly among gentlemen of a military profession. In the following dialogues, I have endeavoured to collect those proofs that are best calculated to answer the common objections to the truth of revelation, which in general I have found its opposers most gloried in; that thereby I might put the real Christian soldier upon his guard, furnished with sufficient artillery, not only to pre-

vent

vent his giving way, when he hears these objections ſtarted with an air of confident ſuperiority, as if truth belonged to them; but, if needs be, that he might alſo advance, boldly encounter his antagoniſt; and, by a clear repreſentation of truth, ſilence, if he cannot convince, him. I have only to add, that the incidents mentioned in theſe dialogues are founded on facts; the characters real (one ſtep in the rank of one of the officers only excepted); and the converſion of the Major, in the laſt dialogue, in ſubſtance that of a valuable officer now on actual ſervice.

CONTENTS.

DIALOGUE I.

Page

Veneration for the Bible - - - - 1
Difficulty of avoiding religious disputes - 4
Bad consequences from them - - 5
Description of one among military gentlemen - - - - - - 7
When religion should be introduced as a subject of conversation - - - 10
Major's scruples about the truth of religion 11
Importance of the subject - - - 12
Strength of the evidence in its favour - 14
Modern Deists, their ignorance of the Scriptures - - - - - - 18
Doctrine of the Bible must be divine, if the facts therein recorded are true - - 19
Inquiry into the history of the Creation and Deluge - - - - - - 21
How Moses obtained the knowledge of these histories - - - - - - 23
Supposition that the Antediluvians excelled us in many branches of science. First use of letters - - - - 27

Impossibility

Impossibility of Moses being able to impose the history of the Deluge on the Jewish nation if it had not been true - - 30
Traces of the Deluge; reasons why so seldom mentioned in profane history - 33
Annihilation of the four grand empires, and present existence of the Jews - - 35
Tradition of the Deluge among all nations 36
Mathematical demonstration that the Chinese chronology does not include a longer space of time than the Mosaic - 39
Sanchoniatho's and Berosus's account of ancient times - - - - - 42
Manetho's and Chœremon's history of the Hebrews - - - - - - 45
Profane authors' opinion of Moses - - 48
Herodotus's character - - - - - - 50
Great difficulty of gathering the truth of facts from profane history , - - 51
Bible—the oldest book in the world - 52

DIALOGUE II.

Study of the Scriptures recommended - 56
Proposed manner of introducing the evidence to support what has been advanced - - - - - - 57
Impossibility of imposing upon the senses - 59
Roman Catholics deny this in transubstantiation - - - - - - - 61
Miracle of dividing the red sea - - 64

Of

Of the Manna—cloudy and fiery pillars - 65
Paſſage over Jordan—Elijah on Mount Carmel - - - - - - - 67
Our Saviour's miracles - - - 70
His Apoſtles' ditto - - - - - - 72
Prepoſſeſſion againſt the truth dangerous - 74
Equally as impoſſible to impoſe the belief of ſcripture facts on ſucceeding generations, as it would have been to impoſe them on ear and eye-witneſſes, if they had not been true - - - 75

DIALOGUE III.

Arguments to prove the impoſſibility of impoſing the Old Teſtament on the Jewiſh nation if it had not been true, illuſtrated by an example - - 78
Puzzling queſtion for modern Deiſts - 83
Major's embarraſſment - - - 84
Suppoſing that Solomon might attempt this impoſition; reply made to him in ſuch a caſe by one of the Elders of Iſrael - 86
Jewiſh civil policy, religious rites, and ſcripture facts, inſeparably linked together - - - - - - 88
Moſes's farewell addreſs to Iſrael - - 90
Scripture facts carefully and faithfully recorded, and handed down to poſterity 93
Deiſts, to overthrow them, muſt firſt ſuppoſe a miracle of their own invention 94

Arguments

Arguments, however good, insufficient of themselves to convince savingly - 95
Strongest evidence for a divine revelation 100

DIALOGUE IV.

Newton on prophecy - - - - 106
Old Testament written before Christ appeared - - - - - - 108
Evidence from Zoroaster's book - -
From Hecatæus of Abdera - - - 109
From Numenius - - - - 111
Spread of the Jewish scriptures - - 112
Translation of the Septuagint - - 113
Fulfilment of prophecies - - - 117
Force and effect of this argument - - 120
Accomplishment of other prophecies - 122
Saviour's predictions relating to Jerusalem 127
Josephus's account of its destruction -
Julian's attempts to rebuild the temple miraculously defeated - - - 134
Authenticity of this fact - - - 135
Effect it had in coverting many Jews - 137
Major's experience too universal - - 138
Repetition of several arguments to prove the divine origin of the scriptures - 141

DIALOGUE V.

Discovery of the Major's sentiments - 144
Insufficiency of human reason to direct in divine things - - - - 148

Proof

Proof of this in Dr. Priestley's and Bishop Berkely's sentiments - - - 149
Use of reason in matters of religion - - 151
Ocular demonstration of the divinity of the sacred scriptures - - - 153
From the world's persecution of the godly 154
From the present state of the Jews - - 156
From the remarkable conversions of notoriously profane characters - - 162
Major's sentiments on the life of Colonel Gardiner - - - - - - - 169
Erroneous sentiment that none but illiterate people are religious - - - 173
Declarations of scripture agreeable to present facts - - - - - 178
Evidence from the dying saint - - 184
Difference between the Christian's and the hero's contempt of death - - 187
Brown's evidence in favour of the scriptures 192
Jenyns's ditto - - - - - - 194

DIALOGUE VI.

Major's conversion - - - - 198
Persecution he really suffered - - - 199
Heavy trial for a military man to encounter 204
Means that may be used in such seasons -
Complete victory he through grace obtained - - - - - - 207
Joy on such an occasion - - - 210
His present experience a strong evidence in favour of the scriptures - - - 211

Difference

Difference between the effect of human arguments and the work of the Spirit of God - - - - - - 213
A carnal man cannot diftinguifh the work of the Spirit - - - 214 & 219
View the converted foul has of the word of God - - - - - - - 215
Conduct he ought to purfue - - - 220
Genuine breathings of his foul - - 222
God the hearer and anfwerer of prayer - 223
Proofs of it - - - - - 224
What true religion is - - - - 226
Paradox with refpect to prayer - - 228
Advantages which the Chriftian enjoys - 229
Pleafures of real Chriftian friendfhip eternal in their duration - - - 232

Sir RICHARD HILL's Testimony and Recommendation in Favour of the Work.

I HAVE read the following pages with much satisfaction, and I hope not without some benefit to myself. The manner in which the author treats his subjects, by introducing them in the way of easy dialogue, at once tends to enliven and to give them force; and by that means to elude what in controversial writings would otherwise appear dry and tiresome. I must also add, that whilst his arguments are pleasingly concise, without being at all abstruse, they are not less convincing and conclusive.

But what appears to me to be the grand excellence in this little volume, and what therefore principally induces me to recommend it to others, is, that it's grand aim and design are not merely to furnish the head with irrefragable proof of the external evidence of our most holy religion, but to instruct and edify the heart, by

bringing the truths of the gospel home to the conscience with life, power, and efficacy; without which, all knowledge would only tend to puff up; light would be without heat; and the professor himself, instead of growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, would be barren and unfruitful; destitute of that principle which alone can bring peace and comfort to his own soul, or make him useful in promoting the salvation of others.

That the book itself may be read with that deep attention which the importance of the subject demands; that it may be crowned with that success in the overthrow of infidelity which may in some degree answer the wishes, and repay the labours, of the pious author; and that the whole may be attended with the divine blessing; is the sincere prayer of

RICHARD HILL.

London, March 10, 1789.

THE

CHRISTIAN OFFICER's PANOPLY.

DIALOGUE I.

MAJOR.

WHAT, always poring over the Bible? I thought you had learned it by heart long ago.

CAPTAIN.

I have a bad memory, Major; and too great a veneration for this ſacred book to let the duſt gather on it. But

how

how came I to be favoured with this early viſit?—is not the regiment drawn out? I was juſt going to the parade, and little expected to ſee you here.

MAJOR.

I this inſtant came from thence. There is to be no review; the General has countermanded his orders on account of the weather. The men are marched into barracks; and curioſity led me here, to inquire how you reliſhed laſt night's religious diſpute; Capt. R—— I thought ſeemed rather to gain ground; at leaſt the laugh went mightily againſt you.

CAPTAIN.

That ſeldom fails to be the fate of him, who in the preſent day has courage

rage enough to defend his religion. A well-timed piece of wit, that will raiſe a loud laugh, has gained more proſelytes to the ſide of error, than ever ſolid reaſoning gained advocates in defence of truth. But neither wit nor laughter will ever bias a wiſe man's judgment; between you and me, Major, they are only the arguments of fools.

MAJOR.

Thank you, ſir, for the compliment. You know I laughed very heartily with the reſt to ſee your embarraſſment. But how comes it you enter into diſputes of this kind, when you know you will only be laughed at?

CAPTAIN.

Believe me, Major, it is greatly againſt my inclination: not that I ſo much

dread the ridicule of being religious, for that I am now pretty well accustomed to; but because of the many bad consequences flowing from such disputes; particularly among gentlemen of our profession.

MAJOR.

Why not avoid them then?

CAPTAIN.

I do; and that with the greatest care: but, while I wish to act up to the profession of a Christian, I am often obliged, both in theory and practice, to differ very widely from my brother officers; who, knowing the cause, immediately introduce religion as a subject of conversation: I am then attacked from all quarters, and, though ever so studious to avoid a dispute, sometimes

find myſelf ſo cloſely interrogated, that I am abſolutely forced, either by a ſullen ſilence to aquieſce in what they advance, or to ſay ſomething in my own defence; and, if I but attempt to vindicate my real ſentiments, a warm diſpute generally enſues.

MAJOR.

And pray what bad conſequences can flow from it?

CAPTAIN.

What I have frequently beheld, with no ſmall degree of pain, young officers, juſt entering into the ſervice, afraid of the ridicule unjuſtly thrown upon real religion, have been led to renounce all virtuous principles, for the vicious libertine notions of their impious com-

panions; imagining they acted right in joining the majority. While the more hardened part of the company have been glad of the occasion, to turn the scriptures of unerring truth into ridicule and contempt.

MAJOR.

But may not all this, my friend, be owing to the badness of the cause you religious people espouse, or to the inability of the person who defends it?

CAPTAIN.

To neither. The cause is good; the proofs on which it is established strong and conclusive, not to be refuted: yet it is next to impossible, for the ablest advocate in defence of Christianity, to

make any ſolid impreſſion on our modern *no-thinking deiſtical atheiſts*; whoſe religious ſentiments (if they have any at all) are as inexplicable as the name I have given them; for, though you ſhould advance the moſt irreſiſtible arguments, you will find them ſo blinded by prejudice, and ſo totally ignorant of the fundamental truths of that religion from which they derive another name, that they cannot bear to be convinced of its divine original. They wiſh it otherwiſe, and their pride will not ſuffer them to make the leaſt conceſſion; therefore they try every method to ward off the blow; and, like the ſcuttle-fiſh, when purſued, that emits a black poiſonous liquor to darken the paths of her purſuers, ſo they never fail to ſpread abroad their wit and humour, mixed with blaſphemous raillery, to darken the clear reaſoning of their antagoniſts,

that they may eſcape themſelves in the confuſion. And, if you follow and preſs them cloſe, they will ſtart from one branch of the ſubject to another; quote a dozen detached mutilated texts of ſcripture (which they remember having read when children), to anſwer all in a breath. And, if they be men of a liberal education, they will try to puzzle you with nice and curious inquiries, which only learned men, verſed in oriental languages and cuſtoms, can eaſily ſolve. Or elſe they will quarrel about the ſenſe of Hebrew or Greek words, which they very little underſtand; enumerate the errors and differences in tranſlations; endeavouring by all means to puzzle and confound perſons unacquainted with ſuch things, and thereby to create in them a diffidence of the truth of divine revelation in general. And if you ſhould ſucceed in driving them

them off this ground, on which they frequently ſhout victory, they then have recourſe to their laſt favourite and never-failing argument;—ſome of Voltaire's impious buffoonery, ſeaſonably applied, ſets the company into a loud roar; the ſhout of triumph and applauſe is echoed from every mouth; and when once the laugh is thus againſt you—it matters not whether you are right or wrong—you are ſure to loſe the day. I have with regret been engaged in many ſuch unprofitable diſputes.

MAJOR.

You have given a pretty juſt deſcription of laſt night's debate; and I ſuppoſe I may conclude your opinion to be, "that religion ſhould never be introduced as a ſubject of converſation."

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

No; I muſt not ſay, never ſhould; but I think it is wrong to do it in the company of thoſe whoſe diſſolute manners and daily practice plainly indicate that they are avowed enemies to God and his religion, and only wait for ſuch favourable opportunities to ridicule both. Kind, ſeaſonable reproof may ſometimes be uſeful to ſuch characters; diſputation only hardens them. But the moſt likely way to ſtrike conviction, or what, at leaſt, will prove moſt profitable to the perſon who follows it, is to ſet before them a bright example of every Chriſtian virtue, that, by ocular demonſtration, they may clearly perceive you act from a divine principle, to which they are as yet utter ſtrangers. But, on the other hand, where deep-rooted prejudice

prejudice does not bar the way to the reception of well eſtabliſhed truth; or where there appears the ſmalleſt inclination to be rightly informed of the tenor or important contents of the everlaſting goſpel, I think it is every Chriſtian's indiſpenſable duty to introduce and enforce them on all ſeaſonable occaſions.

MAJOR.

No man of ſenſe ought to refuſe his aſſent to truth founded on ſolid proof and ſound argument: but, as to what you call the important contents of the goſpel, I muſt frankly confeſs I do not rightly comprehend them; and have had no few doubts and ſcruples about their divine original, as well as the great importance you ſeem to aſcribe to them: however, as I come within the compaſs of the rule you have juſt

laid

laid down; and can truly ſay, I have not only a ſmall, but a very great inclination to be rightly informed in theſe matters; I ſhould be glad to diſcuſs them with you at our leiſure. What do you ſay? we ſhall have plenty of time for this while the regiment ſtays here.

CAPTAIN.

We cannot ſurely employ our time to better purpoſe, or be engaged in a more intereſting inquiry. "Has the "eternal God, indeed, made a revelation "of his will to men?" is a queſtion to be aſked with the moſt ſolicitous anxiety by every rational being. On *this*, and *this alone*, depends our preſent peace and future happineſs. If he has not, then every man following the law of nature, and the dictates

tates of his unenlightened conſcience, will make the beſt uſe of his exiſtence he can. But if he has, it certainly behoves you and me, and every man to know what is the tenor of it. Chriſtianity, Major, is nothing more nor leſs than this important revelation. Yet, ſtrange to think! how very few in this enlightened age ſeriouſly conſider it as ſuch; or even give themſelves the ſmalleſt trouble to be convinced whether it really is ſo or not? You yourſelf acknowledge to have your doubts and ſcruples; owing, I will boldly venture to affirm, to this ſole conſideration; you never heartily troubled yourſelf about the matter. How happy ſhould I think myſelf, if our future conferences on this ſubject were but made the means (under God) of removing your ſcruples. And though I would not wiſh to decline the friendly taſk, yet, believe me, my

heart

heart trembles at the proſpect of entering upon a work of ſuch vaſt concern.

MAJOR.

Afraid, I ſuppoſe, you have not ſufficient proof to eſtabliſh what you have already ſo confidently aſſerted.

CAPTAIN.

By no means. The truth of a promiſed Meſſiah, and his real advent into the world for man's ſalvation, at the appointed time, being the ſum and ſubſtance of both the Old and New Teſtament, is ſupported by ſuch ſtrong undeniable evidence, that all the efforts of wicked men and devils for near ſix thouſand years have rather tended to confirm than deſtroy it. It is like a ſtrong, ſtately, well-built arch; the more you

lay

lay on it, the ſtronger it becomes. This precious and important truth will bear the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny, and not ſhrink from the cloſeſt examination. I dare challenge all the men in the univerſe to produce any one fact, human or divine, attended with ſuch unqueſtionable proof as this. Nay, I will be bold to ſay more, and hope clearly to prove too, that no other fact in future ever poſſibly can have ſuch ſtrong irreſiſtible arguments to ſupport and eſtabliſh it: as if the Almighty had in infinite wiſdom determined that this *grand truth*, of the greateſt glory to God and importance to mankind, ſhould ſtand alone in this reſpect, ſurrounded with a heavenly luſtre which no other truth on earth can claim.—And is there not ſufficient reaſon for holy awe and anxious fear, leſt, in handling ſuch a weighty ſubject, I ſhould not do it juſtice? Believe me,

me, Major, it is generally treated with too much levity, and that is a grand reaſon why it is ſo little attended to.

MAJOR.

I cannot ſay I entertain ſo very high an opinion of this matter as you ſeem to do: yet thus much I can aſſure you; my deſign is neither to ridicule your religious tenets, nor to puzzle you in defending them; but really a ſerious deſire to inveſtigate the truth; therefore I ſhall freely propoſe my doubts whenever they ariſe, and as freely acknowledge when they are or are not reſolved.

CAPTAIN.

That is candid: and on theſe conditions, with the divine aſſiſtance, I hope to be able to prove what I have juſt advanced.

vanced. And may the eternal and ever-bleſſed God, whoſe will we wiſh to know, ſo bleſs this friendly and intereſting conference, that in the iſſue it may prove profitable to us both!

MAJOR.

I ſincerely wiſh it may; therefore join a hearty amen to your prayer.

CAPTAIN.

To begin then—Give me leave (as I cannot but ſuppoſe you have read the word of God) to aſk you one queſtion.

MAJOR.

As many as you pleaſe; only let me firſt caution you, that, if it be reſpecting

any thing recorded in the Bible, I may not perhaps be able to give you a ſatiſfactory anſwer: for, though I may have read it over, perhaps more than once, in my younger days, yet I muſt own I have not peruſed it much of late years.

CAPTAIN.

Juſt ſuch a confeſſion I ſhould have expected from ninety-nine out of a hundred of our modern deiſts. This is one grand reaſon why the ſcriptures are ſo much cavilled at by them: for how can we ſuppoſe they will believe what they are ſo little acquainted with? however, you muſt know enough to be able to anſwer my queſtion. Suppoſe we find the facts recorded in the Bible to be true, from whom do you think the doctrine it contains proceeded?

MAJOR.

MAJOR.

Certainly from God. For if I am but fully convinced, upon the clearest demonstration, that a man like myself, who assumes the character of a prophet, can, with a simple word of his mouth, without the use of means, raise a stinking carcass from the grave, breathe into it a living soul, and work this miracle, with many others of the like nature, to confirm the truth of a message he brings me from God; I must necessarily give credit to this message. I see no alternative, unless I at once renounce my reason, senses, experience, and every thing else by which a rational creature can judge: for all these tell me daily that none but God can empower a finite being, like man, to work such miracles; and I dare not harbour the blasphe-

mous idea, that he would ſet his ſeal to a lie to deceive his creatures.

CAPTAIN.

My buſineſs then muſt be to prove the facts related in the ſcriptures to be true: that they really came to paſs at the time, and in the manner, there mentioned.

MAJOR.

If you can do that, I muſt ſubſcribe to the doctrines they contain. But I fancy you will find this a much harder taſk than you ſeem to imagine.

CAPTAIN.

Truth, to the unprejudiced mind, open to conviction, will more or leſs always find

find its way. But, as I have already hinted, our modern half-thinking deiſts only cavil at it, but never ſeriouſly ſeek to know it. At preſent, however, as you and I are not led by that ſpirit of indolence which takes every thing upon truſt, or elſe refuſes to credit any thing, becauſe of the trouble to ſearch into it; ſuppoſe we begin an inquiry into the two firſt memorable facts recorded in the Bible?

MAJOR.

You mean, I ſuppoſe, the Creation and the Deluge. The firſt of theſe we muſt take upon Moſes's bare *ipſe dixit*; for there could be no human witneſſes preſent.

CAPTAIN.

But there is a ſufficient number preſent now to prove there really is a

 world;

world; we have therefore only to inquire about the time when it was made, which, though at firſt it appears a matter of no great importance, may yet help to throw light upon that part of Moſes's writings ſo much called in queſtion, and prove them to be of divine original.

MAJOR.

How many years does Moſes ſay the world was made before his time?

CAPTAIN.

About two thouſand five hundred.

MAJOR.

I can hardly conceive how the minute circumſtances in his hiſtory could be handed down to him by tradition, through

through ſuch a long ſeries of years, without great errors. Pray how do you account for it?

CAPTAIN.

We Chriſtians are fully convinced, from the moſt indubitable proofs, that Moſes was inſpired by the Spirit of God, and conſequently could not err: but, ſetting that aſide for the preſent, the means by which he came to the knowledge of many of theſe particulars, which we find in his hiſtory, are very eaſy to be conceived. The ſound of two or three thouſand years may frighten us at firſt; but, cloſely examining the matter, we ſhall find that what he recorded paſſed through very few hands before it came to him, not above ſix or ſeven. Adam, who was a favourite of Heaven, and admitted to familiar converſe with God, and whom we cannot therefore

ſuppoſe, in a ſtate of innocency, to be wholly ignorant of the particulars of the creation, was alive many years in the days of Methuſelah and Lamech. Theſe, no doubt, as good men, embraced every occaſion to inſtruct their grand children, Noah's ſons, in all they knew of the hiſtory of the world, the fall of man, and the promiſed Saviour. They were both alive at the building of the ark; moſt probably aſſiſted in the work; and died a very little time before the flood: Methuſelah in the very ſame year. They converſed with the firſt men of both worlds; and Shem, their pupil, who entered the ark about the age of ninety-ſeven, was alive in the days of Abraham and Iſaac; who no doubt received from him a very particular and diſtinct account of theſe great events. Jacob and his children imbibed it from their fathers; and we can be at no loſs to know where Moſes found it. Joſeph, that pious and intelligent

intelligent man, had both wiſdom and power ſufficient to have it preſerved a few years more, till our inſpired hiſtorian appeared.

MAJOR.

You make very ſhort and eaſy work of it indeed. One would imagine, from the few names you have mentioned, you had gone over the ſpace of one century only, inſtead of five-and-twenty.

CAPTAIN.

The long lives of the antediluvian fathers and of Noah's ſons brought the hiſtory of the world almoſt down to Moſes's time: and that of the deluge muſt have been univerſally known; unleſs you will ſuppoſe the moſt abſurd thing in nature—that the heads of every

family

family never mentioned that awful event to their children. Beſides, there were too many viſible marks of it then remaining ever to ſuffer a doubt to ariſe about the matter.

MAJOR.

It certainly appears from his writings that, ſome how or other, he had a very full and exact account handed down to him; for, without it, I cannot poſſibly conceive how he could be ſo minute in mentioning the names, births, ages, deaths, and various other circumſtances, of ſuch a number of men who lived thouſands of years before him.

CAPTAIN.

The antediluvians had ſurely a ſufficient length of time allowed them to

engrave in their memories whatever Adam told them. And if Shem, at the age of fifty or ſixty years, might have forgot any thing that had been related to him, he could always have recourſe to Methuſelah or Lamech. Beſides, do you think theſe long-lived men had no way of recording events, ſo that their poſterity might read when they were gone?

MAJOR.

I think it is hardly poſſible to conceive they could be all fools; and ſuch old ones too. I ſhould much rather imagine they far excelled us in that art as well as in many other branches of ſcience. If our Newtons, Locks, and other great men, had lived nine hundred years, what proficients in learning ſhould we have been?

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

It is affirmed by ſome that the uſe of letters may be traced almoſt as high as the flood: and why ſhould we ſuppoſe that Noah's ſons found out in two or three hundred years what their wiſe forefathers could never diſcover in almoſt as many thouſands? Is it not much more reaſonable to believe the univerſal tradition of the eaſt—that Seth, Adam's ſon, invented the uſe of them? They might not have the knowledge of printing that we have; neither is it likely they knew how to make paper or parchment as we do now; but there are many other ways of recording events beſides thoſe we uſe. The African and Indian nations write much faſter than I can, with a pointed ſteel pencil on a dried flag or leaf, which they can preſerve

ſerve a great many years. I have myſelf frequently dictated to a Gentoo what I was writing in Engliſh, and always found he had got the complete ſentence upon his leaf, in the Perſian language, before I could finiſh it on the paper. And is it not a very probable ſuppoſition, that Noah and his ſons had ſome ſuch records as theſe in the ark, which they afterwards ſhewed to Abraham and Iſaac, and many thouſands beſides?

MAJOR.

Allowing they had not, I think they could hardly forget ſuch a memorable ſtory as the creation, nor their poſterity that of the deluge; the eye-witneſſes to which were but a little while gone from the earth when Moſes wrote.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Putting then all theſe circumſtances together, ſuffer them to have a juſt influence upon your mind, and then aſk this queſtion—Was it poſſible for Moſes to fabricate out of his own fertile brain two ſuch aſtoniſhing events, particularly the laſt, as having recently happened, and be able to make the elders of Iſrael believe they were true, if they had not been ſo?

MAJOR.

That I think he could never have done: for theſe men, no ways renowned for their faith, might, on reading his hiſtory, very juſtly argue in this manner: 'How can this be? You tell us of a 'moſt horrid deſtruction of the whole 'human

'human race by water; and that only one
'man and one woman, their three ſons
'and their wives, were ſaved; and that
'one of theſe ſons converſed with our
'fathers Abraham and Iſaac, and yet
'we never heard of it before? It muſt
'be a barefaced lie, Moſes; for we are
'well acquainted with all the particulars
'of the life of Abraham; more ſo of
'that of Iſaac: and Jacob, whoſe bones
'were carried from hence a few years
'ago, never left behind him the leaſt
'intimation of ſuch an amazing event;
'which, had it been true, we certainly
'muſt have known it long before this
'time: but, as we did not, we very
'juſtly conclude your deluge and your
'notion of creation are both alike—
'a fable.'

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

We may then fairly conclude that, if the people of Iſrael had not known in the groſs the hiſtory of the creation, and of the deluge, as well as Moſes did, they never would have received his particular account of them. But it is evident they well knew the truth of theſe events from their forefathers; and had then ſo many ſtriking evidences of it, that they might as well have denied their own exiſtence as have rejected it. Therefore, through that nation, by the power, wiſdom, and mercy of God, it has been carefully tranſmitted down to us. Yet how frequently have we heard among our military companions the notion of a general deluge ridiculed and called in queſtion, as a thing that never came to paſs; without conſidering that it was impoſſible, as well

as

as altogether unneceſſary, for Moſes to impoſe ſuch a wonderful event upon the Jewiſh nation, if it really had not been true.

MAJOR.

I muſt acknowledge you have greatly mended my opinion of the Moſaic hiſtory: but is there no other beſides his that makes mention of the deluge? no other traces of it to be met with any where but what we find in the Bible?

CAPTAIN.

You may have ocular demonſtration of it in almoſt every pit and quarry that is dug, particularly in ſome countries two or three hundred miles from the ſea; but it is not ſo eaſy tracing it through the dark labyrinth of profane

history. I could indeed easily give you the names of some very ancient historians (though not quite so ancient as Moses); but alas, Major, that is all I can do: their works are for ever lost to us; except here and there an extract from some of them, which we meet with in the works of more modern authors. In the long space of three thousand years, one nation has so effectually destroyed another; and the quick succession of people, so widely different in language, religion, and customs, has so universally prevailed, as to deprive us of any rational account of the creation from them; and left us but a very imperfect one of the deluge. Indeed it is impossible, amidst such general havoc and devastation as we read of in ancient history, that it should be otherwise. One people only it pleased God to save from a total overthrow; and through them we have the history

hiſtory of the world. And here, Major, let me beg of you to pay a moſt ſerious and ſtrict attention to this convincing argument in favour of the authenticity of the holy ſcriptures: it is like a wall of braſs round about them, which all the efforts of the freethinking tribe have never been able to make a breach in. Where are the Aſſyrian, Perſian, Grecian, and Roman, empires? Where the numerous civilized nations that were formed centuries after the Jewiſh, whoſe wiſe laws were the wonder and admiration of the earth? Alas! there is not a trace of them now to be found. But ſtand at the window a few minutes, and ten to one you will ſee a Jew go by. That ancient people ſtill exiſt entire, though ſcattered far and wide; that the threatenings and promiſes of God, contained in the Bible concerning

them, may in their due time be fully accomplished.

MAJOR.

I must own this is a very striking circumstance; but shall we leave it for the present, and inquire a little more particulary into what we can gather from profane authors, and the tradition of ancient nations, concerning the creation and deluge; particularly the last, which, as you hinted, I have often heard called in question, because noboby but Moses ever gave any account of it?

CAPTAIN.

From the little knowledge I have of history, I think I may venture to affirm, there has not a civilized nation existed but what has had some traditionary his-

tory

tory of the flood. It is true (and the nature of things prevented its being otherwiſe) that theſe accounts differ very widely from each other, according to the genius of the people among whom they prevailed. But the grand point we now want to eſtabiſh, they all agree in—that the thing really happened. And to ſay that the tradition of all nations is without foundation, is to aſſert, that almoſt the whole human race have been in a conſpiracy to cheat each other, with regard to an event which could contribute to nobody's intereſt: a notion ſo very abſurd, that a reaſonable man would bluſh to advance it. The Chineſe is unqueſtionably the moſt ancient nation in the world, and has not received new laws from conquering ſavages ſo often as others have. And this people have among them a very ancient tradition of an univerſal deluge, from which only

one man and his family were preserved. The Indian Bramins likewise pretend to have very ancient records in their custody; and tell us from them, with all the imaginary flight of oriental fancy, that there existed three separate generations of men beyond the waters, some of whom lived millions of years, and were many thousand feet high; with many other extravagant notions. But whoever is in any degree acquainted with the genius of the East, and their manner of writing, will very soon discover in their hyperbolical history the very same truths Moses mentions in his.

MAJOR.

I have often heard the Chinese history preferred to that of Moses, as including a much longer space of time. Is there any truth in this assertion?

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Not the leaſt. Though I know the deiſt has often triumphed on this ground, and foiled many a well-meaning Chriſtian, who was not properly accoutered for the field: but that was the believer's fault, and not from any flaw in the cauſe he eſpouſed. The Chineſe, it is true, pretend to a greater antiquity than their neighbours, from a vain conceit of exalting their own nation above all others: an epidemical diſorder which ſeems to run through the whole of profane hiſtory, and ſo obſcures the real truth, that there is hardly any diſtinguiſhing it from error. But, with regard to the veracity of their chronology, you ſhall wholly judge for yourſelf. You are a good calculator, a ſtaunch friend to aſtronomy, and ſhall have mathematical demonſtration. No

deiſt, however obſtinate, ever required more. The Chineſe have carefully, from the earlieſt times, obſerved the motions of the heavenly bodies; and recorded in their calendars remarkable eclipſes, and very ſingular conjunctions of the planets, as having happened in ſuch and ſuch an emperor's reign. Now, in this enlightened age, you know we can calculate back and tell the year, day, hour, minute and ſecond, when theſe eclipſes, conjunctions, &c. happened at Pekin: and from hence we evidently perceive they have made many great and palpable miſtakes in their ſo much boaſted chronology. One in particular has been moſt ſatisfactorily demonſtrated by the famous Caſſini, from a very ſingular and moſt remarkable conjunction of the ſun, moon, and ſeveral planets, mentioned in their annals as having happened almoſt at the very origin of their

hiſtory.

hiſtory. This celebrated aſtronomer, anxious to know the truth of this, calculated back, and from hence diſcovered an error in their chronology of only five hundred years; and proved to demonſtration, that ſuch an extraordinary conjunction of the planets actually did happen at China on the 26th day of February, two thouſand and twelve years before Chriſt: that is, in the fourth century after the flood, in the days of Noah and his ſons, a little after the birth of Abraham. From all which it is clear, that the boaſted antiquity of the Chineſe is forced (from proofs of its own recording) to contract itſelf within the compaſs of the Moſaic hiſtory, and to bring an additional proof of the veracity of the ſacred records.

MAJOR.

I ſhall always be ſatisfied with ſuch evidence as this, though I am ſtill anxious to inquire a little farther how ancient writers agree with our inſpired author.

CAPTAIN.

I have already hinted, that we have none of theſe who can claim antiquity with Moſes: when compared to him, they may very juſtly be called modern. Sanchoniatho, the Phœnician, is among the oldeſt we know of: what ſtill remains of his writings is preſerved to us in Euſebius. He ſeems deeply tainted with the ruling paſſion of profane authors: that of ſacrificing all to the honour of the nation for whom they particularly wrote. In order to place the Phœnician

cian idolatry in the higheſt repute, he carries it up to Cain, the firſt born, and gives a regular account of his deſcendants to the flood, but ſtops there; calling this his firſt chronological line: and then begins his ſecond line with Ham, the ſon of Noah; making no mention of the deluge, for this very obvious reaſon—he muſt then have neceſſarily cut off the whole race of Cain, from whom he labours to prove the Phœnician idolatry regularly deſcended, without interruption: and this omiſſion, with the circumſtances attending it, to any unprejudiced mind, muſt be as ſtrong a proof of the reality of an univerſal deluge, as if he had actually mentioned it. Beroſus, a prieſt of Belus at Babylon, a very noted and ancient hiſtorian, gives a very diſtinct account of this great event; which differs but little from that of Moſes: and it is

remarkable,

remarkable, that both Sanchoniatho and Berofus mention juft ten kings from the firft man to the flood; exactly the number of Mofes's antediluvian patriarchs. From all which it is very evident, that thefe two great writers, fo much efteemed for their antiquity, no wife contradict, but rather confirm the divine authenticity of the facred page. It is indeed true, they differ from each other, and from the facred penman, with refpect to the names of their patriarchal kings; but who does not know that this liberty, which authors have taken to change the names of men and places, has occafioned fuch confufion in ancient hiftory, that the moft learned among the moderns cannot always wade through it to come at the truth. Prideaux informs us that the moft venerable fragment of literary antiquity, now extant, is a catalogue of thirty-eight kings of Egypt, from

from Mizrain, the ſon of Ham, down to the time of the Trojan war. But neither does this contradict Moſes; but, as far as it is connected with his hiſtory, brings in likewiſe an additional proof of its veracity. This, and much more to the ſame purpoſe, may be found in Joſephus's anſwer to Apion; ſee *Lib.* I.

There are two other very ancient authors, Manetho and Chœremon, who mention the Hebrew nation, with the circumſtance of their departure out of Egypt, as they gathered it, many centuries after, from Egyptian prieſts and mutilated records in that country; therefore it alſo neceſſarily differs in many reſpects from that of Moſes: for we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe that theſe prieſts would preſerve this fact to their own diſcredit, or relate it to ſtrangers, ſo much to the diſhonour of their gods and nation as it really happened. Beſides, what man, wiſhing to

know

know the certainty of any memorable event in Cæſar's life, when he fought with the Gauls, would not much rather go to his Commentaries to find how it was there related, than to any of the Romiſh prieſts now in France, or the ſuppoſed old falſified records in any of their monaſteries? The caſe is juſt the ſame with Moſes and the Egyptian prieſts. The authors I have mentioned are ſo vague and unconnected in their relations, that any diſcerning perſon may eaſily perceive they did not draw their materials from a pure ſource. They confound Jacob's poſterity with the Canaanitiſh paſtors, who, before their time, conquered Egypt; aſſerting that after their expulſion they ſeized Judea, and made Jeruſalem their capital. After this they tell us of a vaſt number of diſeaſed perſons, who, being baniſhed Egypt, choſe a prieſt of Heliopolis for their

their leader and lawgiver, who changed his name from Osarsiph to Moses. Chœremon joins Joseph in the command with him, and both make the Canaanitish conquerors confederate with the Hebrews; jumbling the transactions of two centuries into one grand event. You need but read Moses's easy, natural, and connected history, to see on which side the truth stands. However, from the whole of their united testimony we gather this much—that the existence of the Hebrew nation was well known in Egypt at the early period those authors wrote, and the departure of Moses's army out of it actually recorded in the sacred books of that country.

MAJOR.

The truth of the fact itself does indeed appear to be well established, however

the honour of a nation may have occasioned a very wide difference in the relation of it by later authors: but reason will always bias a wise man's judgment to credit the historian who has been an eye-witness to the fact he relates, in preference to another who writes from hearsay, several centuries after; especially if the first has the character of being an impartial writer.

CAPTAIN.

If Moses were not such an one, I think he would not have been so particular in relating his own faults, with those of his favourite people, as he every where takes care to do: a sure mark this of the impartiality of an historian. Diodorus Siculus, an eminent one, of the highest repute among the learned, who flourished a little before Christ, mentions

Moses

Moſes with great honour. More modern authors, ſuch as Strabo, Pythagoras, Tacitus, Pliny, Juvenal, Porphyry, Julian and others of a ſtill later date, though enemies to the Jews, their laws, and cuſtoms (which they did not rightly comprehend); yet never doubted of the exiſtence, wiſdom, and authority, of Moſes; nor heſitated a moment to acknowledge the veracity of his writings.

MAJOR.

I have often heard a great deal ſaid in praiſe of Herodotus as a very impartial hiſtorian; and reckoned, I think, among the moſt ancient; but you ſeem to overlook him, as if he did not favour your cauſe.

CAPTAIN.

He is not near ſo ancient as thoſe I firſt mentioned; but, in every other reſpect, he may be deemed a good hiſtorian: and as far as he was an eye-witneſs to what he relates, or had good authority for it, his veracity may be depended on. But Herodotus has made many great miſtakes, and has not given us a true account of ancient times; becauſe he had no other ſource to draw his materials from, than that impure one already mentioned—the *hear-ſays* of Egypt. He never ſaw any oriental hiſtory; and if he had, he was ignorant of the language, and could not read them. In ſhort, Herodotus, Cteſias, Xenophon, and other Greek writers, differ ſo widely in their accounts of ancient times, that they only create in the mind a longing deſire for

a purer

a purer ſource to ſearch for the real truth, which is no where to be found, but in the ſacred ſcriptures: for, after you have travelled the enormous round of profane hiſtory, you find ſo much diſguſting fable, mixed with matter of fact, that you are tired, loſt, and bewildered, in diſtinguiſhing one from the other. The national prejudices of the authors are ſo palpable, their differences from each other ſo very glaring, that, with reſpect to the creation and the deluge, all that we can learn with certainty is, that ſuch things were mentioned by them, and really did take place. But would we learn when, where, and how, we muſt have recourſe to the inſpired writings; where truth, without a mixture of error, ſhines bright in all its energetic luſtre: conſtraining the unprejudiced reader to acknowledge that

none but the Deity himſelf could be the author of them.

MAJOR.

I cannot ſay I am fully convinced of this: yet, ſo far I will frankly own, the preſent converſation has given me a much better opinion of the ſacred ſcriptures than ever I entertained of them before. Some how or other I cannot forbear indulging a kind of veneration for the Bible, as the moſt ancient book in the world: the antiquity of which I think is ſo very evident, that the man muſt be void of common underſtanding who refuſes to acknowledge it. But you have not forgotten, I hope, that you were to prove the truth of the miraculous facts recorded in it? This, I am apt to think, you will find by far the moſt difficult part of your work.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

It is ſometimes much eaſier work to prove a thing to be true, than to engage the prejudiced mind to embrace it after it is proved: but this I hope will not be the caſe with my friend; however we muſt poſtpone the matter for the preſent. Time has ſtolen away inſenſibly; and you may expect to be called for to receive the General's orders before we could proceed much farther; therefore we will only now determine when we ſhall meet to renew the ſubject.

MAJOR.

I ſhould like to ſpend a few hours with you after evening roll-call; but then it is club-night; how can I avoid that? And what will be ſaid if it ſhould

be known I ſpent the evening with you, poring over the Bible, in preference to the agreeable company that meet there? However I will make a trial; it is but forfeiting my half-crown, and, with a good grace, joining in the raillery which I know will be levelled againſt me. Good morning. I will ſee you if I can.

DIALOGUE II.

CAPTAIN.

I AM glad to ſee you, Major; I had almoſt deſpaired of having that pleaſure this evening. May I not congratulate you on your happy eſcape?

MAJOR.

From what? the company of a ſet of jovial fellows met to make merry? Do you think I ſhall reap more pleaſure from your dry lecture of divinity here, than I ſhould

I ſhould have done in the midſt of mirth and good-humour in the club-room?

CAPTAIN.

That I cannot promiſe; but one thing I will poſitively aſſure you of—there is a time faſt approaching, and perhaps nearer than what is expected, when you will not regret having preferred the ſtudy of the ſcriptures to the frothy converſation of your libertine companions.

MAJOR.

Now you begin to be ſerious, it is high time to enter upon the ſubject we are met to diſcuſs. You know you were to prove the truth of the facts recorded in the Bible, before I engaged to give my aſſent to the doctrine it contains.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

I promifed this, Major, and hope, through divine affiftance, to be able to do it to your fatisfaction. May God imprefs his own truths with power upon both our hearts!

MAJOR.

I ought to join a hearty amen to your prayer, as I feldom have occafion to ufe it with my own.

CAPTAIN.

The manner of introducing my evidences may, perhaps, at firft appear fingular to you, as I would fain wifh to march in a different path from all thofe great men who have already written on this

this important ſubject, in a much abler manner than I can poſſibly think of pretending to: therefore I ſhall attempt to clothe ſome of their arguments in a ſtyle familiar to us both; and illuſtrate them by examples and compariſons drawn from a profeſſion we ought to know ſomething of, that we may ſee them in a more clear and intereſting point of view; and thereby hope that their impreſſion will be more deep and laſting: ſo, without further preamble, I ſhall advance them. Do you know the character of General S——t who commanded the army laſt ſummer at ——?

MAJOR.

Perfectly well. One of the beſt of men; a ſoldier, a gentleman, and a great philoſopher, reſpected and beloved by great and ſmall. But what is all that to our preſent purpoſe?

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Do you think that with all his influence (which you know was not a little) he could have perſuaded a ſingle man of the army, that, one day during the encampment, a certain regiment on the left having murmured againſt the ſeverity of his diſcipline; he ordered the whole army to be drawn up next day on a ſmall eminence, adjoining to the ground where that mutinous regiment only remained in their tents; and, having addreſſed the officers and men in a pathetic ſpeech, told them that, as a proof of his being appointed their commander by God himſelf, and as a ſtriking puniſhment for rejecting the divine appointment, that rebellious regiment ſhould now ſuffer an uncommon deſtruction: and, that immediately on concluding theſe words, the

the earth clave asunder where that regiment was encamped, and in a horrible manner swallowed them all up, tents, arms, baggage, wives, children, and every thing belonging to them: while the army, fearing a similar fate, lost all all order, and fled affrighted from the awful scene?—I say, do you think that with all the eloquence of which he is master, he could make the whole army, or even one man in it, verily believe such an extraordinary event actually came to pass, if it really never happened?

MAJOR.

No: I think it impossible. Because they must first renounce all pretension to the use of their senses, by which alone men are capable to ascertain the truth of such facts.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Then you are no Roman catholic I find; for they will not give us leave to judge by this rule. However, by it you will allow it muſt be a very difficult matter, to convince a hungry man, juſt ready to ſtarve, that you had plentifully filled his belly with wholeſome food; when all the while he had neither ſeen nor taſted a morſel of any thing?

MAJOR.

If the man be in his right mind, and have the uſe of his ſenſes, it is the height of abſurdity to ſay he can be convinced of what he neither ſaw nor taſted.

CAPTAIN.

If one man could not be convinced of this, how could four or five thouſand at once?

MAJOR.

I ſee your drift; and am fully convinced it was abſolutely beyond the power of Moſes, to make ſix hundred thouſand men believe the unhappy fate of Korah and his company, if they had not ſeen it. Neither can I conceive it poſſible, that Jeſus Chriſt could make ſo many thouſand perſons acknowledge their hunger ſufficiently ſatisfied, if he had not really and truly fed them; without ſuppoſing a miracle greater than that ſaid to have been wrought. But all this by no means ſatisfies the inquiſitive mind. I

want

want to ſee clear evidence, that theſe miraculous facts have been faithfully recorded, and handed down to the preſent day?

CAPTAIN.

A little patience, and I hope to be fully able, through divine aſſiſtance, to ſatisfy you on this head alſo: for it hath pleaſed the Great Creator of all ſo to guard his own word from error, to preſerve it pure to the end of time; that it ſtands deeply entrenched (if I may be allowed our military phraſe) with proofs of the moſt convincing nature; clear, ſtubborn, and unſhaken; that the unhappy man who dares to refuſe his aſſent to the truths it contains, might hereafter be left without excuſe. But before I begin to produce them, let us juſt take a curſory view of one or two more

of the numerous miraculous facts recorded in the Bible: that, from this argument already established, we may expofe to juft ridicule and contempt, the very weak and abfurd notions of fome men, who fuppofe they were nothing more than political impofitions on the ignorant multitude, by fome cunning enterprizing leader, better verfed in the fecrets of nature than the reft. A fentiment which you may have often heard advanced in the mefs-room; fuch as Mofes' carrying the children of Ifrael through the Red fea at low water, while Pharaoh, coming too late after them, was drowned by the tide, without ever inquiring whether there be any fuch great ebbing and flowing in that fea; and totally difregarding the language of the facred text, which pofitively and repeatedly affirms, that God divided the fea (which lies north and fouth) by a ftrong eaft wind, which

cut

cut a paſſage right acroſs, making it a wall to the Hebrews on the right and on the left. The place where they went over is well known to this day: and I have myſelf converſed with thoſe, who have frequently ſailed on that part of the ſea, in a man of war, in their paſſage from Bombay to Suez.

MAJOR.

I will not ſtop to inquire how Moſes got his very large army through the Red ſea; but one thing I will be poſitive in, with all the wiſdom, art, and magic of the whole land of Egypt, he never could have perſuaded ſuch a multitude, that he regularly fed them every day with bread from heaven, for the ſpace of forty years, if he really had not done it: and if he did not do it, how could he march ſuch an army through ſuch a country, without

F enormous

enormous magazines of provisions? This (to us military men especially) would be as great a miracle as any in the Bible.

CAPTAIN.

Then I think you seem already to be brought to this dilemma, either to credit the sacred record, or deny the existence, or at least the history, of the Hebrew nation: but we will not stop to argue this point now. You have omitted a very singular circumstance in the miracle of the manna, which totally overthrows the arguments of some, who pretend to account for it in a natural way: and that is, the non-appearance of this bread on the sabbath-day; and that it would never keep good till the second day, except that quantity ordered to be gathered on the day before the sabbath: a string of miracles to confirm

firm and secure the first: such care hath God taken of his own word. But what do you think of the pillar of a cloud by day, and that of fire by night, which, like an advanced guard, constantly went before that numerous host all their journey through the wilderness? Could Moses make them believe this, do you think, unless they had really seen it? As well might you make me believe, that two such pillars of fire and smoke accompanied our army all through America last war.

MAJOR.

The passage of Moses' army through Jordan, seems to be a repetition of the miracle at the Red sea; and is mentioned with such circumstances as take away all the plea for cavilling about tides, &c.

CAPTAIN.

Let any unprejudiced perſons read the third and fourth chapters of Joſhua, and I will defy them to ſay, it was poſſible for that General, or any other, to perſuade ſix hundred thouſand people, that ſuch a miracle as there deſcribed, was wrought before them, if it really had not been done. Beſides, both he and Moſes repeatedly appeal to the people themſelves, for what they had perſonally ſeen, felt, and experienced, of the mighty acts of the Lord.

MAJOR.

I have frequently, when young, taken great pleaſure in reading that notable miracle ſaid to be performed by Elijah, the prophet, on mount Carmel (whe-

ther true or not, I leave you to prove); but it is moſt naturally and beautifully related. While I have trembled at the thought of his dangerous ſituation, alone and helpleſs! expoſed to all the cruel rage of a whole hoſt of bitter enemies! I have not been able to withhold my admiration, at the undaunted manner in which he acted. Surely he had too many prying foes about him, to be able, in open day, to impoſe, in the ſmalleſt degree, on the ſenſes of the numerous ſpectators aſſembled to behold that great tranſaction, who were themſelves the principal actors in it. And when the fire of the Lord fell from heaven, and conſumed the ſacrifice, the wood, the ſtones, the duſt, and the water; the enemies of the venerable prophet would not have fallen on their faces, and cried, "The Lord, he is the God;" "The Lord, he is the God;" if they

had not really seen this fire, and its tremendous effects: much less would they have dragged their favourite prophets to the brook Kishon, to be slain there, while Elijah triumphed in safety.

CAPTAIN.

It is not hardly possible to conceive an enemy of a more envenomed and imbittered spirit, than the Jewish Sanhedrim, the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and Pharisees, were to our Blessed Saviour: and yet he constantly appeals to their senses, what they heard and saw, for the truth of the miracles he daily wrought among them: and though they reprobated his doctrine and despised him, yet they never had the smallest plea to accuse him of imposture; though they tried hard at it in the case of the man born blind. In short, it is manifest they were reduced

reduced to this alternative—either to receive Jeſus Chriſt as the true Meſſiah, or to reject him upon one of the moſt abſurd and childiſh arguments that ever entered the mind of man, viz. that of his working miracles by the power of the devil. Their having no other refuge to fly to but this, is a ſtriking proof, that there was no flaw to be found in thoſe facts, which they were thus conſtrained to put their own ſeal to. To repeat our Saviour's miracles, would be to give the hiſtory of his life, which was a continued ſeries of ſupernatural facts, from firſt to laſt.

MAJOR.

His were all miracles of mercy, ſuited to the doctrine he preached; and if there be a devil, it is no wiſe conſiſtent with the idea we conceive of his nature,

that he ſhould be the author of ſo much good.

CAPTAIN.

The miracles the apoſtles wrought, were of the ſame nature; to ſupport the ſame cauſe; and performed like thoſe of their divine maſter, in open day before multitudes of friends and foes; who never could have been perſuaded of their reality, if they had not actually ſeen them performed.

MAJOR.

Well, I think we may now finally diſmiſs this part of our ſubject, as we ſeem both perfectly agreed, that neither our Saviour, nor his apoſtles, Moſes, nor the prophets, could poſſibly have perſuaded ſuch numbers of men and

women, in the uſe of their reaſon and ſenſes, that ſuch and ſuch miracles were wrought in their preſence, if they had not really and truly ſeen them performed. For to aſſert this, as we have already obſerved, would be to ſuppoſe a miracle equally as great as any we have juſt been mentioning.

CAPTAIN.

However ſtrange a ſentiment it may appear to ſome, it certainly is an undoubted truth, the deiſt muſt firſt believe a miracle of his own forging, that never had an exiſtence, before he can ſhake the Chriſtian in the belief of his, founded on the moſt ſolid arguments.

MAJOR.

MAJOR.

There does indeed appear something like this, while we consider the subject in this point of view; but, how will it be by and by? when you come to prove that these miracles were thus wrought at the time, and in the manner we have just been mentioning? If once this can be satisfactorily done, I must own you will get me so closely hemmed in, as to force me to capitulate on any terms: therefore you must expect, I shall be exceedingly careful in examining every thing you advance, before I will admit of it as solid evidence.

CAPTAIN.

And I shall esteem you a very wise man for so doing: only beware of what has

has ruined thouſands; a prepoſſeſſion againſt the truths at all events. And remember how readily you admitted, from the nature of the evidence already advanced, that it was impoſſible to perſuade men they had been the living witneſſes to, and principal actors in, miracles they had never ſeen nor heard of: for the very ſame proofs, with others that may hereafter be urged, will, I hope, fully convince you, that it was juſt as impoſſible to impoſe the belief of theſe facts on ſucceeding generations, if they had not really happened as the Bible relates them, as it would be to impoſe them on the eye-witneſſes themſelves. But as this will require a very ſtrict inveſtigation of the arguments to be advanced, and a very cloſe attention to the nature and tendency of them, ſuppoſe we poſtpone this matter till to-morrow after the parade; when, per-

haps,

haps, we may have more time to confider it thoroughly.

MAJOR.

I ſhould not, my dear ſir, be put off thus, if I were not engaged out the evening to ſupper. But as it is already late, and as you think the ſubject may probably require more time to diſcuſs it, than we have now to ſpare; I ſhall, with ſome regret, ſubmit to the delay, and not fail to meet you here to-morrow at the appointed hour.

DIALOGUE III.

MAJOR.

I AM glad we have got ſo ſoon home this morning. I hope you will ſhut the door againſt all intruders; for I have but one hour to ſtay with you: the General expects me exactly at twelve: and, ſome how or other, I ſeem all impatience to bring our religious conference to ſome determined iſſue. The ſooner, therefore, you produce your proofs, the better.

CAPTAIN.

Then let me firſt juſt remind you, what was ſo very evident to us both

laſt

laſt night; that it is altogether impoſſible to make men deny the uſe of their ſenſes, and aſſert any thing for truth, which they ſee, hear, taſte, ſmell, feel, and know aſſuredly to be a lie. The very ſame argument, as I then obſerved, concluſive as it is, will hold good in what I am now going to advance; and as nothing is more likely to ſtrike with rational conviction than example, or conveys truth to the mind in a more conſpicuous manner, I will beg leave to propoſe the following illuſtration. Suppoſe I put this large folio volume into your hand, aſſuring you, in a very ſerious and ſolemn manner, that it will not only inſtruct you in the moſt undeniable and important truths reſpecting eternal concerns, on the crediting of which your preſent and future welfare depends; but alſo contains the whole code of Britiſh laws, by which that nation has been in-

variably

variably governed, from its firſt origin to the preſent day. Such a declaration would, no doubt, induce you to read the book; where you would ſoon find a number of miraculous facts recorded, ſaid to be performed by the power of the Deity, to confirm certain doctrines therein contained, which he choſe to reveal for the welfare of his creatures; and that theſe miracles were not only performed before thouſands of men and women, but that the book itſelf poſitively aſſerts, it was written by the actors or eye-witneſſes of the facts it relates: and that from the very day they were performed (as an undeniable proof of their divine authenticity), not only public monuments were erected, but outward actions inſtituted, and national obſervances ordained, to perpetuate the memory of them to the lateſt poſterity: and that theſe inſtitutions, obſervances,

and anniverſaries, have been conſtantly, carefully, and conſcientiouſly practiſed by the whole Britiſh nation, to the preſent day. This aſſertion would inſtantly lead you with eagerneſs to inquire, what theſe inſtitutions and obſervances were; and, among many others, you will find the following:—In commemoration of that important day, when God firſt choſe our fore-fathers to make a favourite nation of them, all males in the land, from that day to this, have received, at a certain age, a particular mark in their bodies, to diſtinguiſh them from all other people on the face of the earth. To perpetuate a moſt aſtoniſhing deliverance, God himſelf required, that the firſt-born ſon in every family ſhould be wholly devoted to his ſervice; and that in conſequence of this, there is not now, nor ever has been, any other in the prieſt's office. For another miraculous diſplay of God's power

power, a remembrancer of braſs is to be fixed to the forehead, and bracelets to be worn on the arm. For a third, the whole nation, on an appointed night in the year, are to have a lamb roaſted, and to eat every part of it in the greateſt haſte, ſtanding all ready accoutred for a long march; and, for ſeven days together, are not to touch a bit of leavened bread. For a fourth, the land is to lie fallow every ſeventh year. For another, every family, at a certain time of the year, are to leave their houſes for ſome days and live in tents. In ſhort, the whole civil policy, and almoſt every law in the land, are only ſo many monuments of the miraculous facts recorded in this book; the contents of which, king, prieſt, and nobles, are conſtantly to peruſe and obſerve: parents are to teach it their children, and it is to be the ſubject of converſation on every con-

venient occaſion to all generations. And all this has been ſo punctually and conſtantly practiſed in all ages to the preſent hour, that the ſacred truths it contains, have never been adultered, nor forgotten. Now, Major, tell me ſeriouſly and candidly what you would ſay of ſuch a book? would you believe it?

MAJOR.

I moſt certainly could not; becauſe it contradicts itſelf throughout, and carries a notorious falſehood on the face of every thing it aſſerts. Had the firſt-born males been always conſecrated to God, as your book ſays, I ſhould now have been in holy orders with my gown and band, inſtead of this ſaſh and gorget. It would be the very height of abſurdity to credit the contents of your folio volume, when every thing it ap-

peals

peals to, as a proof of its authenticity, all ſenſe and reaſon, and common obſervation, evidently prove to be a moſt abominable lie; too glaring to be impoſed upon the weakeſt underſtanding.

CAPTAIN.

Now, Major, let me ſolemnly aſk you a very important queſtion, which, from what you have juſt now ſaid, muſt puzzle you to anſwer; as it has done, and ever will do, all deſpiſers of revealed religion in every age. If Moſes's hiſtory be not really what it declares itſelf to be —the word of the Eternal God; if the miraculous facts therein recorded, to which it appeals for its divine authenticity, had not really and truly been performed at the very time, and in the preciſe manner as there related, how was it poſſible to impoſe ſuch a book on the

whole Jewiſh nation? In what manner did they all at once loſe the uſe of their ſenſes, to which it appeals, and by which only, you ſaid yeſterday, men were capable of judging of ſuch matters? At what period after Moſes do you ſuppoſe ſuch a miraculous impoſition took place? for miraculous it muſt be!——You ſeem to be loſt in thought, as if I had propheſied right: but by no means hurry yourſelf; weigh the queſtion with the cloſeſt attention; for the more minutely it is conſidered, the more my argument, I am confident, will gather ſtrength.

MAJOR.

What I hinted at laſt night, I am afraid is now too truly come to paſs. You have got me ſo cloſely hemmed in, and that by my own argument too, that

at

at preſent I really ſee no poſſible way of eſcape.

CAPTAIN.

I ſhould be ſorry to act the part of an ungenerous foe, and force you to capitulate on hard terms at the point of the bayonet. I had much rather, on the preſent occaſion, give you every opportunity to make the beſt of your ſituation, that, by a cloſe and deep ſcrutiny into the truth of divine revelation, you may ſee it blaze in all its native glory; (for it only wants to be thoroughly known, to be univerſally received,) and be conſtrained to acknowledge the great folly and abſurdity of thoſe who deny it. For this purpoſe, ſuppoſe we fix on the moſt likely time in the Jewiſh annals for introducing ſuch a book as that ſaid to be written by Moſes.

MAJOR.

I was trying at this juſt now when you interrupted me: but the more I conſider it, the more difficult, and abſolutely impoſſible ſuch an attempt appears to be. For ſuppoſe it broached at what period you will, as it appeals to the outward ſenſes of the perſons to whom it addreſſes itſelf, and holds up laws, cuſtoms, inſtitutions, and obſervances daily tranſacted among them to corroborate its teſtimony; how could they poſſibly believe it genuine, if they never knew, ſaw, heard of, nor were ſubject to ſuch laws, cuſtoms, inſtitutions, and obſervances? Therefore it neceſſarily follows, they muſt have known and practiſed them, before ſuch a book could be received as authentic. For is it not natural to ſuppoſe, that if even Solomon himſelf,

himſelf, with all his wiſdom, addreſs, and power, had attempted to impoſe the Moſaic hiſtory on the Jewiſh fathers of his day, ſome one of the ancients at the gate, as ſpokeſman for the reſt, would have addreſſed him ſomewhat in the following manner? "Moſt gracious ſovereign, I honour you as my prince, and "though young, revere you for the "great wiſdom God has given you; "but you muſt not attempt to perſuade "me out of my reaſon and ſenſes; and "tell me, a father in Iſrael, who have "lived eighty years in Jeruſalem, that "I have been an eye-witneſs to, a "partaker of, and a party concerned in, "ſuch a number of laws, rites, and ceremonies, which I never once heard "mentioned before. Your book, king "Solomon, is a fiction from beginning "to end. Pray when did I and my "family eat a lamb roaſted in ſuch a

 "filthy

"filthy manner, in ſuch a violent hurry,
"and in ſuch an uneaſy poſture, as
"your book ſays I have? Or who
"among my brethren here ever heard
"before, that the tribe of Levi was
"peculiarly choſen by God for his ſer-
"vice, inſtead of all the firſt-born males
"in the land? No, no, my gracious
"king, while I admire your wiſdom in
"other matters, you muſt give me leave
"to laugh at your folly, or to doubt of
"your ſincerity in this."

CAPTAIN.

It is then evident, beyond all contradiction, that theſe laws, rites, and ceremonies, originally intended to commemorate miraculous facts, and to typify the promiſed Meſſiah, were, from the very commencement of the facts themſelves, conſtantly obſerved by God's peculiar

peculiar people, the Jews; otherwise it is not possible, there could be now existing such a book as the Bible; for that and the Jewish code of laws are so inseparably linked together, that we can no way conceive how the one could exist without the other; and neither would they have been heard of at all, if the facts recorded in the scriptures had not been really performed as they are there related. Will you give me leave to repeat a part of Moses's farewell address to that great host he commanded, just before they went over Jordan, that you may see how clearly and positively he speaks of these facts?

MAJOR.

If you will give me the Bible, I will read it all, or what part of it you please.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

If you peruſe it all at your leiſure, I make no doubt, but you will find it profitable; but at preſent we will only look at what principally reſpects our preſent ſubject. Read from the ſecond to the eighth verſe of the eleventh chapter, and from the ninth to the fourteenth verſe of the thirty-firſt chapter, of the book of Deuteronomy.

MAJOR.

" And know ye this day: for I ſpeak
" not with your children which have
" not known, and which have not ſeen
" the chaſtiſements of the Lord your
" God, his greatneſs, his mighty hand,
" and his ſtretched-out arm, and his
" miracles, and his acts, which he did
" in

" in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh
" the king of Egypt, and unto all his
" land: and what he did unto the army
" of Egypt, unto their horses, and to
" their chariots; how he made the
" water of the Red sea to overflow
" them as they pursued after you, and
" how the Lord hath destroyed them
" unto this day; and what he did unto
" you in the wilderness until you came
" into this place; and what he did
" unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of
" Eliab, the son of Reuben; how the
" earth opened her mouth and swallow-
" ed them up, and their households,
" and their tents, and all the substance
" that was in their possession, in the
" midst of all Israel: but *your eyes have*
" *seen* all the great acts of the Lord
" which he did; therefore shall you
" keep all the commandments which I
" command you this day. And Moses

" *wrote*

" *wrote this law*, and delivered it unto
" the priests, the sons of Levi, which
" bare the ark of the covenant of the
" Lord, and unto all the elders of
" Israel. And Moses commanded them,
" saying, at the end of every seven years,
" in the solemnity of the year of release,
" in the feast of tabernacles, when all
" Israel is come to appear before the
" Lord thy God in the place which he
" shall choose; you shall read this law
" before all Israel in their hearing.
" Gather the people together, men
" and women, and children, and thy
" stranger that is within thy gates, that
" they may hear, and that they may
" learn and fear the Lord your God,
" and observe to do all the words of
" this law; and that their children
" which have not known any thing,
" may hear and learn to fear the Lord
" your God, as long as ye live in the
" land

"land, whither ye go over Jordan to "possess it."

CAPTAIN.

Can any thing, Major, be more express, or more full to the purpose, than these words? Is it not beyond all controversy clear, that the Mosaic history was carefully written, and delivered by its author to the custody of the eye and ear-witnesses of the facts it records? And that if no such facts had been really done, there could not, as already hinted, have been any Bible? For that book throughout, constantly appealing to these facts for its own authenticity, must of necessity fall to the ground; if these striking memorials of them, which we have mentioned, had not been from the beginning invariably preserved among the people of Israel, and by them faithfully handed down to the present day.

MAJOR.

The more I reflect on this very intimate connection between the Jewish laws and the sacred text, the more I see the utter impossibility of imposing such a book as this on a whole nation as coming from God, unless the facts it records had been true; for such an imposition, as far as I can see of the matter, would again lead me just where I was last night, to suppose another miracle as great as the one I wanted to refute.

CAPTAIN.

I foretold you of this; and as you go along, you will find it to be universally the case with all God's revealed truths: when they are impartially examined, and thoroughly considered, it will evidently

appear they cannot be refuted, without first supposing a miracle to effect it.

MAJOR.

If that be really the case, as I never pretended to such a power, I may as well yield with a good grace to the force of your argument, and leave you the honour of the field of battle; though you must give me leave to confess, that, some how or other, I do not yet find my mind disposed implicitly to embrace the scriptures as the revealed will of God.

CAPTAIN.

I am not at all surprised at it, while these scriptures assure me the "carnal "mind is at enmity with God, is not sub-"ject to his law, neither indeed can be."

But

But thus much, as a candid reaſoner, you muſt allow, that your want of faith, with reſpect to the Bible being the word of God, is not want of ſufficient evidence to prove it ſuch; but to your want of will and ability to believe it.

MAJOR.

That may be the caſe; but I would not have you to imagine, I poſitively and peremptorily, as ſome do, deny the ſcriptures to be the word of God: ſo far from it, I am willing to confeſs, I ſee much more reaſon now to believe they really are ſo, than ever I had before: but ſtill my mind ſeems perplexed, is far from being ſatisfied, and has no fixed determination. Such a faith as mine would make very little impreſſion on my outward conduct; and without that proof of its being genuine,

genuine, I suppose you would set very little value on it; however, I should be sorry if, in our future conferences, you did not proceed on this important subject, and endeavour at least to remove my scruples. You have, no doubt, other evidence of a different kind to produce, which perhaps may have more weight with me than those we have already considered.

CAPTAIN.

No more weight, than as God is pleased to accompany them with his blessing. In the pleasing hope of obtaining that, it will be a delightful task for me, to lay before you some of the leading arguments in favour of the divinity of the holy scriptures: but, before we do this, you will please to excuse me, if I put you once more in remembrance

of what you have already granted, and ſeem perfectly ſatisfied with—that the miracles they relate, could not have been credited by thoſe who ſaw them, unleſs true; and that the Bible could never have been received as authentic by the Jewiſh nation, if theſe miracles had not been, as related, faithfully recorded by the eye-witneſſes to them; and, from the very beginning, as faithfully handed down through ſucceeding ages, by the conſtant obſervance of innumerable laws, rites, and ceremonies; conſequently you now have what you aſked for in laſt evening's conference—a full proof that theſe facts have been faithfully recorded, and handed down to the preſent day.

MAJOR.

I acknowledge having granted this; and ſhould now be glad to enter on the

diſcuſſion

discuſſion of other evidence in favour of this important ſubject; but my time is juſt elapſed; and the old general, you know, is too punctual in that reſpect, to be put off a moment: we muſt therefore poſtpone it till the evening; when, if agreeable, I will endeavour to wait on you.

CAPTAIN.

Nothing can be more agreeable to me than the preſent conference, thus carried on, without that warmth which generally deſtroys all the good that may be drawn from them; therefore beg to make a long truce with all kind of unneceſſary compliment. Any time of the day or evening, that will be moſt convenient for you, your company will always be acceptable.

MAJOR.

Then you may depend on feeing me foon after funfet, when the parade is difmiffed: but before I go, I fhould be glad you would anfwer me this queftion—What evidence do you think is the beft that can be advanced, to prove the truth of the holy fcriptures?

CAPTAIN.

That which our bleffed Saviour himfelf made fo frequent ufe of; particularly when converfing with his two defponding difciples going to Emmaus; and which his Apoftle after him prefers even to ocular demonftration itfelf: for, when comparing it to that, he fays, "we have "yet a more fure word of prophecy, "whereunto ye do well to take heed, "&c." and gives this very fubftantial reafon for it. "becaufe the prophecy

"came

" came not in old time by the will of " men, but holy men of God ſpake " as they were moved by the Holy " Ghoſt." As much as if he had ſaid, " I Peter, an apoſtle, and witneſs for " my divine Maſter, beheld Moſes and " Elias talking with him on the mount, " and heard diſtinctly the voice from " heaven concerning him; and you " may imagine a ſtronger evidence " than this cannot be given of the truth " of the goſpel which I preach: but, " ſtrong as it really is, it is in nowiſe " to be compared to the infallible and " conſtant teſtimony of the Spirit of " God; to which every man, in all " future ages, may have recourſe, with- " out poſſibility of his being in any re- " ſpect impoſed upon."

MAJOR.

If the three difciples who were prefent on the mount of transfiguration, efteemed the predictions of the prophets concerning the Meffiah, a ftronger bafis for their faith to reft on, than the evidence of their fenfes, refpecting what they then faw and heard; furely it highly concerns us to examine attentively the nature of this argument; which, I fhould imagine muft rather gather ftrength from length of time.

CAPTAIN.

And received great additions too fince the apoftles' days, from the exact fulfilment of innumerable predictions, concerning their city and nation, and their Mafter's kingdom.

MAJOR.

MAJOR.

Then if you pleaſe we will make it the ſubject of our evening's conference. Till then, adieu.

DIALOGUE IV.

CAPTAIN.

You are very exact in your appointments of late, Major.

MAJOR.

I ſhould wonder if I were not, while I can hardly think upon any thing elſe; for my mind has been all day pondering upon our morning's diſcourſe, anxiouſly waiting for the approach of evening. Indeed, to ſpeak ſeriouſly, I begin to think a few more ſuch converſations will have a much greater effect upon me than I was at firſt aware of.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Are you then afraid of any bad consequences from them?

MAJOR.

I hope the contrary; but hitherto I find myſelf ſo ſadly bewildered and perplexed, that I really cannot tell what I believe; whether I aſſent to the divinity of the ſcriptures, or not.

CAPTAIN.

Something I ſuppoſe, like Iſrael of old on mount Carmel; halting between two opinions?

MAJOR.

Not altogether fo neither: for I am perfuaded you are on the right fide of the queftion, and care not how foon I was there with you; but ftill my mind is not firmly eftablifhed in the belief of the truth of holy writ, but wavering and haraffed with a thoufand doubts and fcruples, which I feem greatly defirous to have effectually removed: therefore let us enter without further ado on the fubject of prophecy, as we propofed in the morning.

CAPTAIN.

I wifh you had leifure to read Bifhop Newton's excellent performance on this fubject, you would then have a clearer view of the evidence it holds forth than I can

I can pretend to give you; but, for your preſent ſatisfaction, let us try to ſet it in as conſpicuous a light as poſſible: and to that end it will be neceſſary to prove firſt, that the ſcriptures which contain theſe prophecies, actually exiſted before the prophecy was accompliſhed.

MAJOR.

We have already in a great meaſure done this, in our firſt conference on the antiquity of the Bible; but it will be an additional pleaſure to ſtep back into ancient times for the materials you want. It is a wide field I always liked to wander in.

CAPTAIN.

We need not ſtay long in it; for it is ſo clear and ſelf-evident a truth, that the

writings of the Old Teſtament exiſted among the Jews long before our Saviour's time, that the moſt daring infidel of the preſent day, who is not altogether a fool, would dread to expoſe his ignorance in denying it. But for argument's ſake, we will juſt point to two or three authors and circumſtances in antiquity that ſufficiently prove it. The firſt I would mention is Zoroaſter, the chief of the ſect of the Magians, who is ſaid to have flouriſhed about the time of Darius Hyſtaſpes, above two thouſand years ago. He wrote a book called the Sadder, which to this day is well known to be carefully preſerved in Perſia; and in it we find many conſiderable *traites* of the ſame hiſtory as that of the Bible, evidently collected from it at that period (as it is generally conjectured), while he lived with Daniel, whoſe diſciple he is by ſome ſuppoſed to have been: but whether he

he was or not, it is very clear from his writings he had, at one time or other, at leaſt ſome knowledge of the former part of our ſcriptures: conſequently they muſt have then exiſted.

MAJOR.

This is a ſtrong argument of their antiquity. I wonder you had not mentioned it before.

CAPTAIN.

There are ſo many to prove this truth, Major, that it is not poſſible I ſhould recollect them all. The next that is brought to my mind you will find equally as convincing. Hecatæus of Abdera, a well-known author, often quoted by Joſephus, who followed Alexander in all his conqueſts, wrote a par-

ticular hiſtory of the Jews from Abraham to his own time; and in it very particular mention is made of their ſacred writings; and ſeveral ſtories related concerning them, which, whether true or falſe, equally prove the exiſtence of ſuch a book as the Bible at that time; for had there been no ſcriptures Hecatæus could have related no anecdotes about them.

MAJOR.

That is ſelf evident: but I ſuppoſe there is very little credit given to the truth of theſe anecdotes, if there be only that hiſtorian's word for them?

CAPTAIN.

Philip de Mornai, that great ſtateſman and eminent writer, takes particular notice

tice of them in a valuable work entitled "The truth of the Chriſtian Religion, &c." but whether real or fabulous, as I already obſerved, it matters not; they evidently prove that the Bible exiſted before the time of Alexander the Great. But there are others beſides Hecatæus who mention the ſacred ſcriptures. Numenius, a Pythagorean, whom ſeveral prefer to Plato, held them in ſuch high eſteem, that his books of the chief good, of number, and place, are full of paſſages quoted, with the greateſt reverence, from Moſes and the prophets.

MAJOR.

I have often remarked, that ſeveral of our acquaintance have made this objection againſt them, That they are not taken notice of by ancient authors; but you ſeemed to have proved the contrary.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

I will allow they are mentioned but by a very few; and the reaſon is obvious as the noon-day ſun: the Jews were a ſeparated people from all the reſt of the earth; their language unknown to other nations; and their ſcriptures held in too great a veneration to be made common. But when that people were ſcattered abroad by the kings of Aſſyria, and other powerful monarchs; had learned another tongue, and almoſt forgotten their own; it then became abſolutely neceſſary to have their ſcriptures tranſlated into the language they beſt underſtood, for the uſe of their reſpective ſynagogues; and then all the world began to have acceſs to them. But ſuppoſing no pagan author had ever mentioned them, that would by no means prove their non-

exiſtence:

existence: neither Herodotus, nor Thucydides (two very celebrated historians) ever mentioned Rome, though the conquests of that famous people were then extended far and wide; but you would not infer from thence, that there was then no such place or people?

MAJOR.

Certainly not; while I was well assured of the contrary from the testimony of others.

CAPTAIN.

But can there be a stronger argument for the antiquity of the holy scriptures, than that which I just mentioned? I mean the well known fact, of their being translated into Greek, during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt,

three hundred years before Chriſt, and depoſited in his library at Alexandria, a little while after the period we have juſt been exploring; when the time of the calling of the Gentiles drew nigh, and that it ſeemed neceſſary, that the prophecies concerning them ſhould be made public to all the world. This tranſlation is now well known by the name of the Septuagint.

MAJOR.

I have read ſome very fabulous accounts about this tranſlation, which I really cannot believe.

CAPTAIN.

Nor I neither, Major; but truth, like a jewel among rubbiſh, will always retain its native luſtre. Though the Jews have added

added a ſtring of miracles to this ſimple well known fact, that by no means deſtroys the truth of the fact itſelf. If you were told a thouſand fooliſh ſtories concerning the manner in which Pope tranſlated his Homer, would that leſſen your belief of his having really accompliſhed ſuch a work?

MAJOR.

No, while I had other good reaſons to believe he had certainly done it.

CAPTAIN.

Well, there are juſt the ſame arguments in favour of the Bible having been tranſlated into Greek, ſome centuries before the coming of Chriſt, as there are for the tranſlation of Homer's Iliad into Engliſh verſe ſixty years ago. All

ancient authors, Pagan, Jewiſh, and Chriſtian, friends or foes to true religion, who have had occaſion to mention the Septuagint, acknowledge the reality of this tranſlation; and the teſtimony of a thouſand facts and other witneſſes agree to corroborate it. If it had not been ſo, would our Saviour himſelf have appealed ſo often to it, and quoted from it? Would his apoſtles have ſaid ſo much about the ſcriptures, and inculcated the ſtudy of them in their epiſtles and goſpels, if they had not exiſted long before their time? Or would the Jews have written ſo very many, and ſo very long paraphraſes or comments* upon them, both before and ſince the Meſſiah's time, if there had been no ſuch book as the Bible to comment upon?

* Jonathan, the Chaldee, and Onkelos, before Chriſt.

MAJOR.

It is absurdity in the very abstract to suppose such a thing; therefore let us drop the subject, as I am altogether ready to perform what I said in the beginning of our conference—freely confess when my mind was fully convinced of any thing; which it certainly now is, that the Old Testament existed long before our Saviour's days; and, that he must be an ignorant and obstinate man indeed, who would presume to deny it. But let us now have a view of the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in the New.

CAPTAIN.

We need but look into our Bibles to see this. Christ being the sum and sub-

ſtance of the ſcriptures, he is there propheſied of from beginning to end. The manner of his conception is there foretold to be ſupernatural; of the ſeed of the woman, and not of the man, becauſe he had no man for his father. He was to be born of a virgin, and that virgin to deſcend from David. The place of his birth is named. The ſecond temple was to receive him; and, on that account only, deemed more glorious than the firſt. The time of his coming was pointed at by good old Jacob, about one thouſand ſeven hundred years before it arrived, when the regal power ſhould depart from Judah. Daniel, more particular than he, names the exact time, four hundred and ninety years; and then confidently aſſerts, that, at the concluſion of that period, the Meſſiah ſhould be cut off, but not for himſelf. And with regard to the deſign of his coming, the nature and character of

of his perſon, with the manner of his death; the prophet Iſaiah deſcribes them full as diſtinctly as his own apoſtles did.

MAJOR.

Mentioning Iſaiah, you bring to my recollection the thoughts that have frequently paſſed my mind on reading the fifty-third chapter of that prophet. It is ſo like one out of the goſpels, I am always led to conclude, Iſaiah muſt have been an eye-witneſs to the treatment our Saviour met with from the Jews.

CAPTAIN.

He certainly was taught this by the Spirit of God, and ſaw clearly the day of Chriſt, as Abraham had done before him; therefore, propheſied very minutely concerning almoſt every thing that

was to befal him on his appearance in the world, many hundred years before the facts happened: describing most distinctly the complex character of his person as our Immanuel, both God and man; the nature of his office as a mediator; the many great and precious blessings that would flow from the salvation he was about to accomplish for his own people: with many other striking consequences, that would follow on his undertaking and finishing this great work. All which are so many undeniable proofs that this blessed and sacred book, the Bible, is of divine authority. Do not you feel the force of this irresistible argument, Major? or has it no influence with you?

MAJOR.

I have already, and do again most deliberately pronounce him an ignorant and

and obſtinate man, who, from ſo many ſtriking evidences, will not allow that the Old Teſtament exiſted long before our Saviour appeared; and, conſequently, the predictions concerning him were then delivered: therefore, how can I poſſibly evade the overpowering force of this argument? It commands conviction, and leaves not the ſmalleſt room for oppoſition: but, with reſpect to the influence it has upon my mind, I muſt beg leave to poſtpone the diſcuſſion of that matter to another opportunity. Let us, for the preſent, continue our views into the prophecies of the Old Teſtament.

CAPTAIN.

It would be a work far exceeding the limits of our time, minutely to examine all the various prophecies contained in the

the Bible; we muſt therefore confine ourſelves to a ſhort reference to a few of the moſt intereſting, which more eſpecially relate to the promiſed Meſſiah; and particularly thoſe that reſpect the ſingular circumſtances attending his death; that grand act which neither the blinded Jews, nor even his own diſciples, could form any idea of; but on which all our future hopes for happineſs depend. Theſe circumſtances the prophets deſcribed as diſtinctly as the evangeliſts; and his bittereſt enemies, inſtead of preventing, were principally employed, as inſtruments in the hands of Omnipotence, more effectually to bring them to paſs. David, by the ſpirit of prophecy, declares they would give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink. And the evangeliſt, in relating the fact, ſays, "they "gave him vinegar mingled with gall." The royal prophet further predicts the

piercing

piercing of his hands and his feet, the parting his garments, and casting lots for his vesture. And see how very exactly all this is fulfilled in John xix. 23, 24. Nay, the very words in which the chief priests derided him, are foretold by this prophet; "He trusted in "God, say they, that he would deliver "him; let him deliver him, if he will have "him:" and so wrote David of them, word for word, many hundred years before. Isaiah says, He should suffer with malefactors, that they would scourge him, buffet, and spit upon him, and so it came to pass. Zechariah, that he should be pierced; nay, tells you the exact number of pieces of silver they would give for him, and the use they would afterwards make of that money. His body was not to see corruption, neither was a bone of him to be broken, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

MAJOR.

MAJOR.

All this is amazing; and appears to be an unanſwerable argument to prove the divinity of the ſacred ſcriptures: but what aſtoniſhes me moſt, is the wonderful manner in which his inveterate enemies are brought in to fulfil theſe prophecies.

CAPTAIN.

Had his own frightened apoſtles been any wiſe concerned in the matter, it would have been ſaid they acted ſo on purpoſe; but ſurely nobody, that ever read the four goſpels, would ever once entertain a thought, that either the chief prieſts, or Roman ſoldiers, performed what they did to fulfil the prophecies concerning him. The very reverſe is ſelf-evident; for

for had theſe doctors of the law been aware of what they were doing, they would either have ſealed their lips, or upbraided him in other words than thoſe which David put into their mouths. Wine and honey would have been at hand, inſtead of vinegar and gall. They would have taken particular care, that not a bone in his body ſhould have been left whole. And ſurely they would have given one or two pieces of ſilver more or leſs than juſt thirty, Zechariah's number; and when it was returned, they certainly would rather have thrown it away, than purchaſed a field with it; at leaſt, not the potter's field. And with regard to the Roman ſoldiers, I believe we may ſafely venture to ſay, they knew no more of the ſacred ſcriptures, or the prophecies contained in them, than our military deiſts do; therefore can only be conſidered as inſtruments in the hand

of

of divine Providence, when they parted his garments, and caſt lots for his veſture; forebore to break his bones, and pierced his ſide with a ſpear.

MAJOR.

There certainly is here a very ſtriking diſplay of divine wiſdom and power, that the very perſons who were ſtriving with all their might to deſtroy the kingdom of Chriſt, ſhould be thoſe particularly employed in order more effectually to eſtabliſh it. But ſhall we not proceed in a further view of theſe prophecies?

CAPTAIN.

It is ſo large a field, Major, that as I have already hinted, it will not be poſſible for us to do it juſtice in the courſe of this evening's converſation; I would therefore

fore advise you to consult, at your leisure, those authors who treat largely on the subject: particularly Bishop Newton with whose work I can supply you, and where you will find this subect handled in a compleat and masterly manner. But before we part, we may turn our attention, a few minutes longer, to some of the great events foretold by our Saviour, and literally fulfilled since his time.

MAJOR.

I suppose you particularly mean that of the destruction of Jerusalem? and here again I must confess my having been struck with the same astonishment in reading Josephus, as I am now in reading the prophecies of Isaiah; for that author seems to have had nothing else in view, than to adjust his history to the predictions of Jesus Christ.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

But Joſephus was a Jew, a very ſtrict one, and never eſpouſed the Chriſtian cauſe.

MAJOR.

Then ſo much the more is his evidence to be depended on; for it is impoſſible any thing could be more exactly fulfilled, than the prediction of our Saviour concerning the deſtruction of Jeruſalem was, as related by that Jew, in the hiſtory of his own nation. Chriſt foretold a tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world, no, nor ever ſhould be: an aſſertion that we ſhould have thought too ſtrong, if the event had not fully juſtified it. The hiſtorian, in deſcribing the complicated

and

and unheard of miſeries that befel that devoted people and city, fills you with a kind of unutterable horror! Nature recoils and ſhudders at the ſcenes of diſtreſs, cruelty, and bloodſhed, which he ſimply relates: it is hardly poſſible to read them without being affected: I could neither have conceived, nor believed them, if the author himſelf had not been an eye-witneſs of the facts.

CAPTAIN.

You have taken the weapons out of my hands, Major, and ſeem to handle them very dexterouſly. Pray go on.

MAJOR.

I beg your pardon, my dear ſir; but really there is ſuch a clear blaze of evidence in this one prediction of Chriſt,

that I cannot forbear giving in my testimony to it, as sufficient of itself to support the truth of the sacred writings.

CAPTAIN.

Blessed be God, he has not left the truth of his own word to rest upon one, two, or a hundred predictions: but since this seems to have such weight with you, (as indeed it ought with every reasonable man, and certainly had with the first converts to christianity after the apostles days) we will endeavour to consider it a little more attentively. In the first place, it was foretold by Christ, with all its concurrent circumstances, at least forty years before it came to pass; and is recorded, without the least reserve or obscurity, by three of the evangelists; whose gospels were spread throughout the world, while Jerusalem was in a flourishing

riſhing ſtate. And in theſe goſpels many other ſtrange events are predicted to precede the ruin of the temple, all equally and exactly fulfilled as that was. Such as the appearance of falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, who deceived many to their deſtruction; that his diſciples ſhould be brought before kings and rulers, for his name's ſake; that they ſhould be hated, perſecuted, and cruelly put to death; that his goſpel ſhould firſt be publiſhed throughout the world, as a teſtimony to all nations; and that ſo rapid ſhould be its courſe, that ſome then preſent ſhould not ſee death till all was fully accompliſhed: which we are ſure the beloved diſciple did not, whatever others might. The predictions of Daniel are likewiſe foretold to arrive firſt; and the Saviour exhibits them as warnings to his followers, from which they ſhould take the alarm, and flee with the

 utmoſt

utmoſt precipitation out of Jeruſalem. And how graciouſly did he provide for their ſafety at that very critical juncture? When the city was firſt beſieged by the Roman army, it was full of Chriſtians; but the ſiege was unexpectedly raiſed during a ſhort ſpace, for no reaſon that hiſtory gives; and they inſtantly ſeized the favourable opportunity, obeyed their Lord's command, and fled to the mountains, to a city called Pella: and no ſooner were they eſcaped, than the Romans returned to Jeruſalem; and then followed that horrid ſcene as related by Joſephus.

MAJOR.

Horrid indeed! and what is very remarkable, the more the conquerors wiſhed and ſtrove to exerciſe their humanity, the more they were forced to be cruel.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

When the Almighty executes his vengeance, he can prepare any inſtrument for the work: a virtuous and humane Titus, as well as a wicked and cruel Nero. Not all the efforts of a Roman Emperor, at the head of a victorious and well diſciplined army, could ſave the temple from deſtruction, when Chriſt had ſaid, that "not one ſtone ſhould be left "upon another." The plough muſt paſs over it in ſpite of all oppoſition.

MAJOR.

I think I have read ſomething about attempts to rebuild it.

CAPTAIN.

And these attempts in the issue proved stronger evidences in favour of our Saviour's prediction, than all the numerous friends to christianity could ever have produced: so frequently do we see the enemies to truth employed to establish it. Julian, the emperor, one of the bitterest enemies to Christ that ever existed, with a view to defeat this prophecy concerning the temple, determined to rebuild it; and, in conjunction with the Jews, made great preparations for that purpose: but one far mightier than he baffled all his satanic schemes; and, by earthquakes, hurricanes, and eruptions of fire, destroyed the work; and frightened the workmen in such a manner, that, after repeated attempts to succeed, with the same miraculous opposition, they were at last

laſt conſtrained finally to deſiſt: not for want of will, men, money, or materials, but merely through dread of divine vengeance; which even Julian himſelf trembled at, and never dared to attempt it more.

MAJOR.

If theſe facts are well atteſted, they muſt needs be a ſtrong bulwark to chriſtianity, and an indiſputable evidence of the divinity of its bleſſed author.

CAPTAIN.

There is not a fact in hiſtory better atteſted than this: it is related by many hiſtorians of the ſame age, and mentioned both by pagan and Jewiſh authors. The learned Chryſoſtom, in a ſermon againſt the Jews, admitting it as a

 thing

thing which they all well knew, tells them, "it was yet recent in the memories even "of their young men; that the inha-"bitants of Jerusalem, who were eye-"witnesses to the fact, were still living "to attest it; and the marks of it "are too conspicuous in the rubbish "of the work to be called in ques-"tion." This was an appeal to the senses, Major, which you are so fond of; and we have not the smallest reason to doubt Chrysostom's veracity; especially when corroborated by the united testimony of so many authentic writers of that day: such as Marcellinus, an heathen historian, Ambrose, Ruffin, Philostorgius, Zozomen, Nicephorus, and others; and even by Julian himself, in the fragment of an epistle, published by Petarius. Mr. Addison, who you will allow was sufficiently capable to examine the truth of historic facts, calls this an indisputable

indiſputable one: beſides, there is not a doubt to be made, but it was the means at the time it happened of bringing numbers of Jews to embrace the chriſtian faith; an effect it never could have had, if it had not been univerſally acknowledged to be true.

MAJOR.

It is a pity it had not the ſame effect now; for we ſeldom hear of a Jew's converſion.

CAPTAIN.

Such facts as this require to be very accurately examined, in order to aſcertain the truth of them now; and Jewiſh prejudice, the moſt obſtinate of any, will never ſuffer them to ſearch for the truth: beſides, the ſcripture muſt be

fulfilled

fulfilled concerning them, and Iſaiah's prophecy is ſtill in its full force— "They hear, but do not underſtand; "they ſee but do not perceive."

MAJOR.

I am afraid ſomething ſimilar to this is my preſent experience; for though I have already acknowledged, and do ſtill give my full aſſent to the truth of the chriſtian revelation, from the force of the arguments you have urged in its favour; yet ſtill I feel no inclination, and am confident I ſhall never be able, to alter my conduct agreeable to its doctrine: I have gone too long, and too far the wrong way; and I am ſure it muſt be a power, ſtronger than I am in any meaſure poſſeſſed of, to put me right: therefore——

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

You may well heſitate to finiſh your ſentence: give me leave to do it for you—" therefore you are determined to " continue juſt as you are." Is not that what you wiſhed to have ſaid, Major?

MAJOR.

Something like it.

CAPTAIN.

It is the common ſentiment of thouſands in the preſent day. " We have " been ſo long wicked, therefore " muſt remain ſo." This confeſſion I have heard from numbers of my brother officers, convinced of the truth, but determined to harden themſelves againſt it:

it: but what an awful and dreadfully fatal determination it is, I leave you to judge. Running headlong to inevitable deſtruction, with the eyes wide open, muſt ſurely be a conduct far more prepoſterous than even the hardened obſtinacy of the blinded Jew; and muſt end—

MAJOR.

Stop, my friend; you muſt not begin to preach yet, or perhaps I ſhall be apt to wiſh you a good night rather abruptly: I did not poſitively ſay I had taken ſuch a reſolution; only expreſſed my fears of being obliged to do it. But waving all perſonal feelings; if you have any further arguments to advance in favour of the ſacred ſubject we are upon, I will gladly ſtay and hear you till midnight; or if you had rather (as it is now late), we will put it off till to-morrow.

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

To-morrow, Major, I think will ſuit beſt; and while you continue to have ſuch an inclination to inveſtigate ſeriouſly this important ſubject, you will always find me ready to aſſiſt you in the delightful employ. But, before we part this evening, give me leave to recommend to you a general and accurate review of the holy ſcriptures: they will bear examining. Conſider attentively the wonderful and uninterrupted chain of connexion, by which they have been held together unſhaken, through ſo many ſucceeding generations; the various tempers, talents, and ſituations of the reſpective writers of the books of which they are compoſed; yet all perfectly harmonizing in the ſame eſſential divine doctrine they contain; the purity, holi-

neſs,

neſs, and goodneſs of that doctrine; with the awful diſplay and grand ideas which they give us of the Supreme Being: and you will not poſſibly be able to ſuppoſe they could ever be the work of man's invention, or the complicated labours of any ſet of men whatever. Read them with accuracy and candour, and you will find in their humble plainneſs, more awful majeſty; in their genuine ſimplicity, more of the true ſublime; in their unadorned attire, more real beauty; in their candid impartiality, more force and energy; than is to be found in any human compoſition, in any language, age, or country. Like common bread, ſuited to the taſte of every palate, the weakeſt capacities among mankind can eaſily comprehend their general ſcope; while the proud ſceptic will there meet with the depths of divine realities which he can never,

fathom; at which the most presumptuous tremble, and which sets the wisest of men on a level with the most ignorant: so excellently adapted are they to instruct the humble, and confound the pride of all. May that eternal spirit who indited them, effectually reveal their divine import to your soul! You will then see and feel much more than I can possibly say to you about them; and, with this prayer, which comes from the heart, I will wish you a good night.

MAJOR.

And to-morrow, at the usual hour, I will not fail to call upon you. Adieu.

DIALOGUE V.

CAPTAIN.

WHAT is it you, Major? I had given up all hopes of ſeeing you this morning, and was juſt going to take a ride round the lines. You have exceeded the appointed hour: may I know what has detained you?

MAJOR.

What all the regiment knows, you ſurely need be no ſtranger to. I have been theſe two hours cloſeted with the general;

general; and you and your religious ſentiments have been the principal ſubject of our converſation. My old companions, it ſeems, have obſerved ſome alteration in my conduct of late; and, ſuſpecting the cauſe, have been officious enough to acquaint the general; from whom I have had a very ſharp lecture indeed.

CAPTAIN.

So then, they have found you out already. Well, it muſt be owned for the devil's honour, he does keep a good look out; he will not ſuffer a deſerter to eſcape his camp, if he can poſſibly help it. I wiſh our ſentries were half as vigilant. But you look melancholy, Major, as if you were loth to leave his ſervice.

MAJOR.

Pray do not banter me now, B——; this affair is become too ferious to be trifled with. You know my many obligations to the old general; how much I am indebted to him for the promotion I have had in the army, and what further dependance I ftill have on his great intereft; and, if I difoblige him now, I muft give up all future profpects of rank from that quarter.

CAPTAIN.

Well, you have only to balance the matter fairly, and determine, like a wife man, whether rank in the army on earth be preferable to a kingdom of glory in heaven: or which you think is eafieft to bear, the frowns of a fellow creature, or the wrath of our great Creator.

MAJOR.

MAJOR.

I dare ſay, after the acknowledgments I have made, you think I may well be aſhamed at the inconſiſtency of my conduct in heſitating about the matter, as a truly wiſe man would be at no ſtand in fixing his choice: but, notwithſtanding all this, before I can determine mine, I muſt examine a little farther into the nature of the Chriſtian faith, inveſtigate every argument, and hear all that you have got to ſay in its favour: therefore, if you pleaſe, we will leave the general and my promotion (as Felix did Paul) to a more convenient ſeaſon, and purſue this intereſting ſubject as cloſely as we can. I have been repeatedly told this morning to exerciſe my reaſon, my reaſon: if I would but follow my reaſon, I could not be thus fooliſhly miſled.

CAPTAIN.

They could not (in matters of religion especially) have advised you to follow a blinder guide: take that little volume from the book-case, and read Mr. Jenyns's character of human reason: it is a very just one, and you will see how much you are obliged to your friends for their advice.

MAJOR.

"There is no absurdity so extrava-
"gant which she is not ready to adopt.
"She has persuaded some that there is
"no God; others, that there can be no
"future state. She has taught some, that
"there is no difference between vice
"and virtue; and that to cut a man's
"throat, or to relieve his necessities, are
"actions

" actions equally meritorious. She has
" convinced many that there can be no
" ſuch thing as ſoul or ſpirit, contrary
" to their own perceptions; and others,
" no ſuch thing as matter or body, in
" contradiction to their ſenſes. By ana-
" lyzing all things, ſhe can ſhew that
" there is nothing in any thing; by
" perpetual ſifting ſhe can reduce all
" exiſtence to the inviſible duſt of ſcep-
" ticiſm; and, by recurring to firſt prin-
" ciples, prove to the ſatisfaction of her
" followers that there are no principles
" at all."

CAPTAIN.

However *outré* at firſt ſight this picture may appear to be drawn, it is certainly a very exact likeneſs; for, under the tuition of this ſo much admired teacher, the learned Dr. Prieſtly has proved,

proved, to the ſatisfaction of thouſands (who wiſh the doctrine true) that there is no ſoul nor ſpirit. And the late famous Biſhop Berkeley, by much ſtronger arguments, has clearly proved that there is no ſuch thing as body or matter: ſo that, between theſe two favourite pupils of human reaſon, we have neither ſoul nor body. You may believe it if you pleaſe; I certainly ſhall not.

MAJOR.

No, nor any man who has perceptive faculties to convince him he has a ſoul, or the uſe of his ſenſes to know he has a body: but is reaſon then to be totally diſcarded in matters of religion?

CAPTAIN.

By no means; for true religion is in no reſpect whatever contrary to the ſoundeſt

foundeſt reaſon, though in many of its divine truths it goes far beyond it; and, whenever attempts are made to explain, fathom, or comprehend theſe by the powers of natural reaſon, ſuch attempts are generally productive of the greateſt abſurdities in thoſe who are fool-hardy enough to make them: agreeably to the author you have in your hand, who ſays, "that, in matters which lie within "the narrow circle of her intelligence, "reaſon is undoubtedly a very good "guide; but on the ſubject of revela-"tion, her province is only to examine "into its authority; and when that is "once proved, ſhe has no more to do "than to acquieſce in its doctrines: "therefore is never ſo ill employed as "when ſhe pretends to accommodate "them to her own ideas of rectitude "and truth."

MAJOR.

That is a very juſt obſervation; but do you perceive all this while we are rather ſtepping aſide from the important ſubject I anxiouſly wiſh to diſcuſs more thoroughly. You have not ſurely led me into this bye-path, becauſe you had no more arguments to urge in its favour?

CAPTAIN.

Far from it; the moſt convincing proofs of the truth of God's word may be daily gathered from the experience and conduct of his rational creatures, both good and bad: there is nothing wanting but a conſiderate mind to obſerve them. While waiting for you this morning, I was reflecting on ſome that may

may fairly be drawn from ocular demonſtration; and pleaſing myſelf that they would prove acceptable, perhaps profitable.

MAJOR.

Ocular demonſtration! Is there ſuch a thing to be come at in our day?

CAPTAIN.

Moſt certainly; if people would but open their eyes and look, which thouſands indeed will not even deign to do. Pray have not you this morning had ocular demonſtration ſufficient, in the countenance of your beſt friend, of his high diſpleaſure againſt you, in having only a tendency towards a religious conduct? and is not this a clear fulfilment of Chriſt's prophetic declaration, "I

"came

" came not to ſend peace upon earth, " but a ſword; the parent againſt the " the child, and the child againſt the " parent; brother ſhall betray brother " to death, &c." Believe me, Major, it is an undoubted fact, atteſted by the experience of a thouſand living witneſſes in this kingdom, that, whenever a ſoul begins zealouſly to ſeek after God and its true intereſt, that ſoul ſuffers perſecution from one quarter or another. There have been frequent inſtances of the beloved heir of a family, the darling of his parents, the joy of his friends, and the delight of all his acquaintance, becoming at once the object of their keeneſt hatred; for no other reaſon but becauſe divine grace had opened his eyes to ſee the value of his immortal ſoul, and taught him (like a wiſe man) to give all diligence to ſecure its eternal welfare. A clear proof this of the truth

of

of Chriſt's doctrine, and of the natural enmity in the heart of man againſt God, his people, and his ways.

MAJOR.

It ſeems indeed ſtrange, that one man ſhould perſecute or hate another merely for ſtudying what he thinks will promote his own happineſs.

CAPTAIN.

Strange as it may ſeem, Chriſt foreknew it would be ſo, and told his diſciples to expect it; and ſo it has happened in every age and place ever ſince. And if God incline your heart reſolutely to ſeek after his ſalvation, ſo as to enable you to give up the world, its ſinful maxims, pleaſures, and cuſtoms, be aſſured your beſt friend immediately will become you bittereſt enemy.

MAJOR.

MAJOR.

I can hardly believe it: however, we may have an opportunity ere long of proving whether you are a true prophet or no; in the mean time let us have another of your ocular demonſtrations.

CAPTAIN.

There is one juſt now very ſeaſonably going by on the other ſide of the ſtreet, with whom I know you have had ſome dealings lately.

MAJOR.

What, Levi the Jew? that notorious villain who took me in the other day with ſo much art, to purchaſe for three times its value what he called a fine Spaniſh

Spanifh blade? I have borne him a grudge ever fince.

CAPTAIN.

Well, he may make you fome amends now, if you can look upon him and the reft of his nation as living witneffes of the truth of God's facred word. Perhaps you may remember at the beginning of our conference we juft hinted at this proof; but it is of fo convincing a nature, and fo very confpicuous throughout the whole earth, that it well deferves a little farther difcuffion; for nothing can be more evident than the fulfilment of the declarations of the Almighty by his prophets concerning this people. If this be not ocular demonftration, I am at a lofs to know what is? Mofes, Ifaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and almoft all the prophets, tell us, as plain as language can exprefs, that

they ſhall be a ſeparated people from all the kindreds of the earth; that they ſhall be ſcattered among all nations; perſecuted, reproached, and deſpiſed; that all nations whither they are driven ſhall be utterly deſtroyed, while they ſhall continue to remain a diſtinct race to the end of time. "I will ſift them, ſaith the "Lord, among all nations, like as corn "is ſifted in a ſieve; yet ſhall not the "leaſt grain fall to the earth." Now, Major, as you have paid ſome attention to the hiſtory of this diſtinguiſhed people, you cannot but remember what potent enemies they have had; mighty kings and princes uſing their utmoſt exertions to extirpate them from off the face of the earth both root and branch; and yet, by the alone interpoſition of divine Providence, all attempts to this purpoſe have proved abortive; and they ſtill remain to this day, though mingled, yet more diſtinct,

tinct, if not more numerous, than any one nation under Heaven. Surely on ſuch a review as this we may well take up the language of Pharaoh's magicians, and ſay, "The finger of the Lord is "here." And, on the other hand, when we conſider the many attempts that have been made to incorporate them with other nations, even here in England, which have likewiſe all failed; we are conſtrained to acknowledge, This is the counſel of God, and it ſhall ſtand. Beſides, who can look upon a Jew and not ſee the evident marks of his own curſe on his forehead? He who runs may read this inſcription, "His blood be on "us, and on our children:" for to this day they remain not only a ſcattered, but a perſecuted and contemptible people. In England, indeed, they ſuffer leſs than, perhaps, in any other nation; but abroad I have ſeen them worſe treated

than our Weſt-Indian negroes, and generally held in leſs eſteem.

MAJOR.

I believe the marks of this curſe are much more viſible at China and Conſtantinople, with the Dey of Algiers, or at an *Auto de fe* in Spain, than it is on the Royal Exchange: and it muſt be acknowledged, there never was a people on earth who ever ſuffered ſo much as the Jews have done ſince our Saviour's crucifixion. But are there not ſome prophecies in their favour?

CAPTAIN.

This queſtion calls up another proof which our Bible has to produce above all other pretended religions in the world; in that it contains not only prophecies

phecies already accomplifhed, but many that are daily accomplifhing, and others to be fulfilled at the appointed time: among thefe, that refpecting the converfion of the Jews to Chriftianity is very clear and diftinct; but as it is very probable neither you nor I fhall live to fee it fully accomplifhed, we will proceed to fome other evidence; only let me firft beg of you, whenever you fee a Jew, to confider him as a living witnefs for God upon earth; an ocular demonftration of the truth of holy writ, which all the art of Satan and his emiffaries fhall never be able to deftroy: for it will remain while fun and moon endure.

MAJOR.

While I view them in this light, I fhall certainly have a little more refpect for Abraham's race, than I have hitherto

had: but go on with your next proof if you pleaſe.

CAPTAIN.

Do you remember your old acquaintance Colonel K—— of the——, who did duty with us at ——— about two years ago?

MAJOR.

I have good reaſon to remember him ſo long as I live: but what has he to do with us now? You never ſurely intend to bring ſuch an impious being as he is for an argument in favour of any thing good?

CAPTAIN.

It is juſt ſuch an one I want: the more wicked he is, the better he will anſwer my purpoſe.

MAJOR.

If that be your plan, you need look no where else for another; for I verily believe there is not a more daringly wicked fellow under the canopy of heaven.

CAPTAIN.

Now, Major, suppose in your next interview with the Colonel, you were to find a thorough change effected in his principles; the whole man totally reversed; the debauched libertine become the chaste patron of purity, both in theory and practice; the impious blasphemer, a holy pious supplicant at a throne of mercy; the passionate, proud, ambitious tyrant, a meek and lowly follower of the Lamb of God; in short, his whole deportment and conduct no longer

the ſame, the gentleman and officer only excepted: or, to uſe the language of ſcripture, ſuppoſe you were thus to find him in all reſpects a new creature, what would you think of the matter?

MAJOR.

From the perfect knowledge I have of his character and ſentiments as a man, I would not heſitate a moment to call it a miracle, equal to that of the converſion of St. Paul.

CAPTAIN.

And if the Colonel himſelf were to inform you that this change was ſudden, like that of the Apoſtle's, and not effected by any human means or motives; but that, on the contrary, he had innumerable proofs, ſtrong as thoſe of his own exiſtence,

ence, to convince him daily it was the ſole work of the Spirit of God, calling him from the abyſs of nature's darkneſs to the glorious light of the everlaſting Goſpel: would you believe him?

MAJOR.

While I had ocular demonſtration of ſuch a miraculous change, as you have deſcribed, I could attribute it to no other cauſe than that of a divine power.

CAPTAIN.

Then, Major, if you will give me leave, this very evening I will introduce you to ſeveral of my acquaintance, men of learning, ſolid ſenſe, and ſound judgment, on whom this miracle of grace has been performed; who were, not only by their own confeſſion, formerly as bad or

worſe than the Colonel, but the united teſtimony of all who knew them fully confirm it; and too many proofs of their folly yet remain ever to call it in queſtion. And that there is ſuch a bleſſed change effected as I have deſcribed is evident to thouſands; and you may behold it whenever you pleaſe.

MAJOR.

I am afraid I ſhould make but a very indifferent figure in a religious company, therefore beg for the preſent to be excuſed from ſuch an interview: eſpecially as I have an unbounded confidence in my friend's veracity; and verily believe there may be ſuch ſingular characters, with whom, perhaps, a perſonal acquaintance ſome time hence may not be diſagreeable.

CAPTAIN.

There are two in particular who just now recur to my mind, in whose company I am sure you would be highly delighted: one formerly a captain in the army, the other an officer in the navy; who in many respects far excelled even the Colonel in wickedness: but sovereign grace effected an universal change, and they are now both of them zealous and pious ministers of the gospel.

MAJOR.

Such instances are certainly very striking proofs of the divinity of Christ's religion; but I should think are very rare, as we seldom hear of them.

CAPTAIN.

That is your miſtake, Major, and the grand miſtake of the preſent day. Such miracles of grace are numerous: thouſands of them are now extant in England. The great and aſtoniſhing work may be clearly ſeen in performing almoſt every day; though it muſt be owned, very few conſider it with that attention it deſerves; but it can in no wiſe become a leſs evident mark of divine power, becauſe men obſtinately ſhut their eyes, and will not ſee. We are all ready to acknowledge the finger of God was evident in the converſion of a Paul; but was it leſs ſo in a Colonel Gardiner, a Captain S——, a Captain M——, a Captain J——, or a N——n; and many hundreds beſides, whom I could name? The difference of time, place, and manner

ner is nothing: the grand change was equally miraculous in all.

MAJOR.

I remember, ſome years ago, reading the life of that brave officer you firſt mentioned, with a degree of aſtoniſhment, and hardly knew then what to think of it: there ſeemed to be ſuch evident marks of veracity in the narrative, that I verily believe it would have had a much greater effect upon my mind, had I not been conſtrained to join in opinion with my companions that it was all enthuſiaſm.

CAPTAIN.

You may call that book of Euclid's on the mantle-piece the production of enthuſiaſm, if you pleaſe; but the demon-

ſtrations

ſtrations it contains very ſufficiently convince me to the contrary. You and all the men upon earth may try to perſuade me that the rays of the ſun, which dart through theſe windows, wholly originate from the extinguiſhed lamps in the ſtreets; but ſurely I ſhould be deemed a very great fool to believe you, while I was convinced my eye-ſight was good. So when I ſee a notoriouſly wicked man, both in principal and practice, become wonderfully and effectually changed both in heart and life, an ornament to the Chriſtian name he bears; you and all the world may cry out enthuſiaſm! enthuſiaſm! till you are hoarſe; but I can believe it nothing leſs than the real work of the Spirit of God, (which the ſcriptures declare it to be) and a bright ocular demonſtration of the truth of the Chriſtian religion. Many ſuch inſtances have I known in the courſe of a very

few years: some, whose profane conduct in their unregenerate state is still recent in the memory of almost every inhabitant of these towns; who now view the amazing change that has taken place with astonishment and surprise. I breakfasted with one this morning, who, in his early days, was noted as the most abandoned and profligate young fellow in the place where he lived: a grief and plague of heart to his relations, a disgrace to his profession, and a nuisance to society: the town rang with his wickedness: but when sovereign grace stopped him unexpectedly, and unsought for, in the midst of this mad career, what an amazing change ensued! good and bad beheld it with a degree of wonder. This hardened sinner was effectually turned from the error of his ways, became an useful member to society, a comfort to his friends, an ornament to Christianity;

tianity; and ſoon after a faithful and fervent preacher of the everlaſting goſpel. Is not this ocular demonſtration of the moſt convincing kind? and does it not clearly prove that the word of God is true; that he has a church upon earth; and is ſtill daily adding unto it ſuch as ſhall be ſaved?

MAJOR.

It certainly is, and one of the ſtrongeſt I think you have yet alleged: but after all, it does not ſeem to ſtrike the bulk of mankind.

CAPTAIN.

Becauſe they ſuffer prejudice to blind their eyes, will not examine into the truth of facts, obſtinately refuſing to be convinced: but matters of fact in a better

better ſenſe, are as obſtinate as they; for after all that can be ſaid againſt them, they remain matters of fact ſtill: and this is a ſtrong and well ſupported one, which cannot be controverted ſpeaking plainly and diſtinctly on God's behalf; and woe be to them who refuſe to pay attention to it.

MAJOR.

I believe the grand reaſon why men of ſenſe and rank in general pay ſo little attention to religion, is the mean opinion they entertain of the capacities of thoſe who eſpouſe its cauſe?

CAPTAIN.

Men of ſenſe and rank, Major! and have not read the works of Newton, Milton, Locke, Witſius, Spanheim, Leighton,

ton, Mede, Owen, Lord King, West, Lord Littleton, Selden, Stillingfleet, Allix, Lord Barrington, Watts, Boyle, Bacon, Burnet, Beveridge, Grotius, Addison, Abbadie, Young, Hervey, Hall, Lessley, Tillotson, Toplady, De Mornai, Clark, Campbell, Cave, Calamy, Cowper, Hale, Haller, Usher, Derham, Paschal, Prideaux; and a hundred more that I could name—What do you think of these?

MAJOR.

Think of them! why I thought I had got on the parade, close by the serjeant calling the rolls. Pray what can you intend doing with this numerous company?

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Bring them into the field of battle, (a choice band of veterans!) and put it out of your power, or that of any deiſt upon earth, to ſelect me an equal number of more profound judgment, deep reaſoning, ſolid ſenſe, or extenſive learning; and thereby for ever ſhut, as with bars of maſſy braſs, the impious mouths of thoſe who dare affirm the religion of Jeſus is a cunningly deviſed fable, which only poor, weak, prejudiced minds, old women and children, pay any regard to.

MAJOR.

You ſeem rather warm, my friend. I did not reject the teſtimony of theſe great men.

CAPTAIN

CAPTAIN.

I have a better opinion of your judgment, Major, than to entertain ſuch a thought; bu when I reflect how often it has been urged againſt me in diſpute, that none but ignorant and illiterate people are religious, it puts my blood all in a ferment, and grieves me to the heart, to ſee my fellow-creatures ſo perverſely and obſtinately blind. One would think ſome at leaſt, if not all the names of the reſpectable and learned perſons I have mentioned, would command an awe and veneration; when it is ſo well known, that all theſe great men having beſtowed uncommon labour, and unwearied diligence, in the purſuit of truth, found it, through grace, in the ſacred oracles; and were not only fully convinced of it themſelves, but boldly aſſerted, proved, and demonſtrated,

demonstrated the divine authority of the Christian revelation to others. Witness Newton's Chronology, Boyle's numerous publications against Atheists, Deists, on the Resurrection, the Scripture Style, &c. Locke's Reasonableness of Believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and his Commentaries on Paul's Epistles; Addison's Evidences; a valuable work, which, though the author did not live to finish it, I would strongly recommend to your attentive perusal.

MAJOR.

I should certainly conclude that person altogether inexcusable, who would obstinately refuse to hear what these great men had to say on so important a subject; therefore, I fully purpose to devote some part of my reading hours to a close study of their works. But a

 thought

thought just now strikes me, which seems rather to argue against what you have been advancing? Pray does not the scripture affirm, that not many wise men after the flesh, are called to be the favourites of Heaven? that, on the contrary, God hath chosen the poor, rich in faith, and heirs of his kingdom? but in opposition to this, you have brought in a number of the wisest men that ever lived.

CAPTAIN.

I am glad to find, Major, you have not altogether forgot your Bible. From the passages you have quoted out of it, you have furnished me with another bright evidence of its divine original; an ocular demonstration universally acknowledged: for nothing can possibly be more conspicuous than that the bulk of real christians

christians are only to be found among the lower clafs of mankind: few, very few comparatively, among the great, the rich, the noble, or worldly-wife, care any thing at all about religion, God, or their fouls: a thoufand living witneffes drowned in the pleafures of fenfe, and wholly devoted to the maxims and fafhions of a finful world, daily confirm this truth. But obferve, Major, the beautiful and ftriking declaration of fcripture; which by no means infers a total exclufion of fuch characters: a confideration of which, made a noble lady of Scotland break out in raptures of gratitude to God, for the letter M; and that it was not written in his word, not *any* noble, rich, or wife, &c. agreeable to the beautiful lines in Cowper:

> We boaft fome rich ones, whom the gofpel fways,
> And one that wears a coronet and prays:
> Like gleanings of an olive tree, they fhow
> Here and there one upon the topmoft bough.

Not that the Former of us all, in this,
Or aught he does, is guided by caprice;
For tho' the silver trumpet's heavenly call
Sounds for the poor, it sounds alike for all:
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they;
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead preponderating weight,
That endless bliss, how strange soe'er it seem,
In counterpoise flies up, and kicks the beam.

So that you see your objection falls to the ground, while the truth of God stands clear and unimpeached; positively affirming, that not *many* wise, rich, or noble, would be the objects of sovereign mercy, yet evidently implying that *some* would; as hath been fully verified in the pious life and godly conduct of some few in the very highest stations of life: and from the list of great men I just now repeated, it would appear as if God had selected some of the brightest characters that ever lived upon earth, boldly to defend his cause; that

that the motly brood of deiſts, infidels, and ſceptics, might bluſh when they ſtand up to oppoſe it.

MAJOR.

I ſhould think it would be an excellent weapon to handle when religion is derided in company, on account of the meanneſs of its followers, to read over your roll to them.

CAPTAIN.

I ſeldom make uſe of above one or two names out of it when I find the converſation tending that way, and coolly aſk if they have read the works of Locke or Newton? or knew that they were religious men? This, if they are not altogether paſt every ſenſe of ſhame, generally has the deſired

effect; and, either ſtops their mouths, or turns the converſation into another channel.

MAJOR.

I think I may now venture to ſay, it is more than probable, ſhould I hereafter be engaged in a religious diſpute, I ſhall be found on the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion from what I uſed to be: and as I cannot but expect, on that account, to be very roughly handled, you muſt continue to furniſh me with all the beſt arguments you have, that I may not injure a cauſe, which, I am now well convinced, merits a much abler advocate than I am to defend it.

CAPTAIN.

One would think the evidence already produced in favour of the Chriſtian

tian revelation, would be more than sufficient to convince any reasonable man of its divine original: but having to do with the ignorance, obstinacy, and rooted prejudice, of the human heart, we find them all, alas! too weak to produce any saving effect: it must be a power far greater than what is lodged in argument, to make any real and lasting impression there. However, that you may have your quiver full of them, I shall always be ready to communicate whatever I experience most convincing and establishing to my own mind. And, there is just now one come to my recollection, which has often been of infinite advantage to me; a demonstration that my eyes have enjoyed while bathed in a flood of the sweetest tears; and which for hours I have contemplated with a rapturous heart-felt delight, far beyond any thing I ever experienced of an earthly

kind. But, perhaps, it would not be always ſuitable to urge it in a mixed company, unleſs it could be done with all that ſolemnity and awe which ſo ſerious and important a ſubject demands.

MAJOR.

You raiſe my expectation very high: pray what can it be?

CAPTAIN.

It is a grand diſplay of the Almighty's power, confirming the veracity of his own word that paſſes unnoticed by thouſands; and which, perhaps, you have never been a witneſs to: I mean the death-bed of a ſaint in the full exerciſe of faith, triumphing over every fear, and exulting with joy unſpeakable in the

the clear view of an opening eternity; transported beyond all possible conception from a heart-felt experience of the substantial reality of divine truths, and anticipating the ecstatic raptures of a future state, almost beyond the power of frail nature to sustain. This is not the airy flight of imagination, Major, but a solid incontestible fact experienced by numbers, seen and admired by thousands. Death-bed facts are solemn things: they carry weight with them. Truth, if ever it comes uncorrupted from the human lips, it is at this decisive period; for how can we possibly harbour a thought, that the dying saint, who has done with the world, and expects every moment to appear before his God, would deliberately affirm what he did not feel. The celebrated Philip de Mornay, prime minister to Henry the Fourth of France,

France, the greateſt ſtateſman of his age, the braveſt officer, and the brighteſt Chriſtian; being aſked a little before his death "if he ſtill retained the ſame "aſſured hope of his future bliſs, which "he had ſo comfortably enjoyed during "his illneſs?" made this memorable reply: "I am a thouſand times more "confident of it from the inconteſtible "evidence of the Spirit of God, than "ever I was of any one mathematical "truth from all the demonſtrations of "Euclid."

MAJOR.

This was a bold aſſertion indeed: ſurely to ſuch happy men death cannot well aſſume his title of king of terrors?

CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

So far from it, he is to them the most desirable object on this side eternity: they view his daily approaches with a delight which is much better felt than expressed, and wait for his arrival with a pleasing anxiety almost bordering upon impatience. Numerous examples of this kind have been recorded to corroborate the precious truth, as you may see at your leisure in Burnham's Pious Memorials, Middleton's Biographia Evangelica, and other writers: and this it is, that makes the Christian's triumph over death differ so widely from the boasting bravadoes of some men, who only from necessity seem to court his approach. You and I, Major, have seen many a brave officer go into the field of battle, to appearance not afraid of

of death; but, I never knew one yet but what was heartily glad when the conteſt was over, and that king of terrors marched off the field. A ſure indication, that had not his honour, his country, or his intereſt called him there, he had much rather have been engaged on any other piece of ſervice, than daring the power of this mighty monarch. During your campaigns in Canada, you, very likely, may have been a witneſs to the heroic exit of ſome captive Indian, daring his tormentors to do their worſt: but I believe there never was one found yet, but what would have gladly accepted of life, could he poſſibly have eſcaped to his own tribe. But I have ſeen the happy Chriſtian enjoying ſuch ſweet foretaſtes of that bliſs which he was confident he ſhould partake of throughout eternity, that he had but one friend left he wiſhed to

ſee,

ſee, and that was death. The offers of life with all its poſſible advantages would have been one of the greateſt diſappointments he could have met with.

MAJOR.

Such Chriſtians as you deſcribe would make an excellent party to attack a forlorn hope.

CAPTAIN.

Real Chriſtians will always make the beſt ſoldiers on any attack, becauſe they act from a principle which neceſſarily makes them ſuch. Though here, alas! I muſt confeſs, a painful ſenſation ariſes in my own breaſt, on reflecting how lamely I have acted the Chriſtian ſoldier's part, in defending one of the ſtrongeſt batteries that was ever yet erected.

erected. But I hope too, in some measure, I have fulfilled what I undertook at the beginning of our conference; and though by no means with that force of argument and power of conviction I could have wished, or, as the importance and truth of the subject deserves; yet, I trust, not altogether without some profit to myself or some effect upon you. But the circumstance of my journey to Wales, which you know I must undertake to-morrow at the request of an aged father, will interrupt our conversation on this interesting subject for some weeks; though I think, I may venture to promise myself, you will not altogether drop it in my absence. In the perusal of the authors I have recommended, particularly Addison, Lesslie, and Haller, you will find a number of new arguments which I have not mentioned, enforced in so clear and convinc-

ing

ing a manner, that the infidel muſt be hardened indeed who does not feel their force. But above all, let your principal ſtudy be in the ſcriptures themſelves: they carry their own evidence, and, if the Spirit of God be pleaſed to unfold it to your underſtanding you will need no other: beſides, may I take the liberty to recommend your going to hear Mr. S——? if you have courage enough to get over the ſhame, I dare affirm you will not repent it on a future day.

MAJOR.

I had ſome thoughts of this myſelf before you mentioned it; but whether I do or no, or what will be the iſſue, time only will diſcover. And, as I hope to be favoured with your correſpondence during the tedious intervals of

 abſence,

abſence, you may expect to have the earlieſt notice of all that paſſes.

CAPTAIN.

That will afford me a peculiar ſatiſfaction indeed, and be the moſt effectual means of removing the uneaſineſs I have felt ever ſince the tidings came that I knew would oblige me to break off, for ſome time, our agreeable conferences; which I would now wiſh to do with a quotation from a celebrated modern author. "I cannot," ſays he, "conceive one ſingle character of a "divine revelation, but what I find "the ſacred ſcriptures marked with. "The divine authority, majeſty, holi-"neſs, and goodneſs, diſcovered there-"in; the depth, ſublimity, and bene-"volence of their matter; their ſcope "to render all the glory to God,

"and

" and crush the corrupt inclinations of
" man; the transcendent loftiness of
" their style, even when suited to the
" capacity of the weak; the obvious
" candour of the writers, in relating the
" weakness, and faults of themselves, and
" their nation; their amazing harmony,
" though of very different stations and
" ages, and publishing things contrary
" to the natural inclinations of men;
" the attestation of those writings, by
" vast numbers of important, public,
" and incontestible miracles; the joy-
" ful suffering of millions for their
" stedfast adherence thereto; the mar-
" vellous preservation of them, and the
" signal strokes of divine vegeance on
" such as attempted to destroy them;
" their amazing success prevailing over
" the lusts of men, and furious opposi-
" tion of worldly power to the civiliz-
" ing nations; and to convince, convert,

" and comfort, the hearts of millions " the most obstinate; the exact fulfilment of the numerous, and particularly circumstantiated, predictions thereof; are so many infallible documents " that they only are the word of God, " able to make us wise unto salvation."

MAJOR.

Give me leave to add a paragraph from the book you just now put into my hand; it appears peculiarly applicable to our subject, and pleases me much. " If any man," says Mr. Jenyns, " can believe that at a time when the " literature of Greece and Rome, then " in their meridian lustre, were insufficient for the task, the son of a carpenter, together with twelve of the meanest " and most illiterate mechanics, his associates, unassisted by any supernatural

"power, ſhould be able to diſcover or
"invent, a ſyſtem of theology the moſt
"ſublime, and of ethics the moſt per-
"fect, which had eſcaped the penetra-
"tion and learning of Plato, Ariſtotle,
"and Cicero; and that from this ſyſtem,
"by their own ſagacity, they had ex-
"cluded every falſe virtue, though uni-
"verſally admired, and admitted every
"true virtue, though deſpiſed and ridi-
"culed by all the reſt of the world: If
"any one can believe that theſe men
"could become impoſtors, for no other
"purpoſe than the propagation of truth;
"villains for no end but to teach ho-
"neſty, and martyrs without the leaſt
"proſpect of honour or advantage;
"or that, if all this ſhould have been
"poſſible, theſe few inconſiderable per-
"ſons ſhould have been able, in the
"courſe of a few years, to have ſpread
"this their religion over moſt parts of
"the then known world, in oppoſition

" to the interests, pleasures, ambition, " prejudices, and even reason of man- " kind; to have triumphed over the " power of princes, the intrigues of " states, the force of custom, the blind- " ness of zeal, the influence of priests, " the arguments of orators, and the " philosophy of the world, without any " supernatural assistance: if any one can " believe all these miraculous events, " contradictory to the constant expe- " rience of the powers and dispositions " of human nature, he must be possessed " of much more faith than is necessary " to make him a Christian, and remain " an unbeliever from mere credulity."

CAPTAIN.

That is good sound reasoning, Major: I hope at my return to see some of its happy effects in my friend's principles. Till then, farewell.

DIALOGUE VI.

MAJOR.

My dear friend, I am heartily glad to ſee you: ſurely providence brought you here to-day, at the very moment when I ſtood moſt in need of your advice. We did not expect to ſee you in the garriſon till Saturday.

CAPTAIN.

Some family affairs brought me to town ſooner than I firſt intended, which were ſettled with double diſpatch from

an eager impatience I had to ſee my friend, and to congratulate him on the happy change of heart he has experienced ſince we parted; now made a partaker of that rich grace, which, but a few weeks ago, he ſo heartily deſpiſed. Never in my life, did I enjoy ſuch a rich feaſt of ſolid happineſs as that which your firſt letter afforded me. O, my friend, what a loud call is here for you and me to bleſs God for his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs! But what is the matter with you now? there ſeems a gloom on your countenance, which by no means becomes your preſent happy ſtate?

MAJOR.

O do not call it happy; the very reverſe is the caſe. Your joy will be but of a ſhort duration, when I tell you, I am juſt upon the point of renouncing

all

all that I have experienced, and am ſo beſet from every quarter, as to be in a manner conſtrained to retain (at leaſt the profeſſion of) my old ſentiments about religion, bad as they are: indeed I have almoſt promiſed the General as much.

CAPTAIN.

God forbid! But how came he to know any thing of the happy change in your ſentiments? pray let me hear it all.

MAJOR.

The whole garriſon knows it. Male and female, all are up in arms againſt me. The letter which you are pleaſed to ſay afforded you ſuch a feaſt, contained the ſubſtance of that great and unexpected change of mind, which, after

a long night of deſpair, I experienced on the ſabbath after you left us. Such a heart-raviſhing train of pleaſing views then crowded in, ſuch glorious ſcenes of future realities were ſpread before me, and ſuch a flood of holy joy carried out my ſoul to love and ſerve God; that I never, no never can be perſuaded, let what will befal me, that it was any thing elſe than the work of a ſupernatural power. On the morning of that day, ſhame kept me from going to hear Mr. S——; but when that change took place, all perſuaſions became unneceſſary; my happy heart longed for the the evening, when I heard him with pleaſure, totally indifferent as to the conſequences which I well knew would inevitably follow. For next day it was ſoon noiſed abroad where I had been; the General about ten o'clock ſent for me, and taxed me with it; and, without

heſitation,

hesitation, was answered in the affirmative: for my raptured soul had not yet lost the relish of its former visit, but dared to look, with an air of calm indifferency, on the heavy storm I saw brewing in his countenance; for, with a surly tone, he asked me if I intended to continue going to that d——d place? I replied I fully intended it. You have then, says he with a sneer, adopted the sentiments of your praying companion Captain ———? My sentiments, I told him, were such as I was not ashamed to own; and with regard to what he meant, I believed they were much the same as those of my friend, and hoped ever to retain them. At this he flew into a violent rage, cursed, swore, and stamped about the room, like a madman, till I thought it was best to withdraw; and very abruptly wished him a good morning. Since that we have had several

veral long conferences, and ſome very warm diſputes on the ſubject; in which he has left no argument untried to bring me over to my old plan of life and way of thinking: particularly urging his long and great friendſhip for me, and on the ſcore of gratitude, pleading hard but for one ſmall favour, only to promiſe I would no more go to hear Mr. S—. Here I began to ſtagger; my feelings were affected; honour and gratitude ſpoke in his favour; and I am afraid he then had too much reaſon to expect I would comply with his requeſt; though I did not abſolutely promiſe him any thing. But, ſince all this, a very unexpected circumſtance has juſt occurred, which will prove the hardeſt conflict of all; as it muſt neceſſarily oblige me this very afternoon finally to decide one way or other. Colonel H——— of the ———, died laſt week at Bath;

and

and the General received yesterday an intimation that he might have the appointment for his friend. He immediately sent for me in a great hurry, put the letter into my hand, and told me, if I chose to rise in the service, it wholly depended on myself; I had but to comply with his wishes, and he assured me, he would certainly procure this step for me; at the same time entreating me, with all the tenderness of a father, not to ruin myself by a refusal. Surely heaven in this trying moment interfered; for just as I found my mind giving way, a sudden recollection led me to beg for a short respite till this afternoon; alleging that the matter was of too great a concern with me to be hastily decided. And now, my dear friend, what shall I do? heaven or earth must this day have my heart. The struggle within it is greater than

I can

I can expreſs! It tears my ſoul, and puts it to the moſt exquiſite torture! Surely the ſacrifice is too great for nature to make.

CAPTAIN.

But not for grace. My heart indeed bleeds for your ſufferings; but rejoices in the ſingular providence that preſents you with ſo glorious an occaſion of making a bold ſtand for the truth, which I truſt that grace will enable you do: and then, on a future day, it may prove a bright evidence in your favour; when, perhaps, the enemy may hide every other mark of your Chriſtianity from you. The beſt, and only advice I can give you, at the preſent deciſive juncture, is, in the ſtrength of your omnipotent Leader, to uſe the means he hath appointed; lift up your heart in prayer to

God

God for that faith, which carried the worthies of old through all their conflicts; muſter up all your reaſoning powers; religion by no means diſcards their due and proper uſe: take heaven and earth, and weigh them; ſoul and body, and value them; time and eternity, and meaſure them; the favour of God and that of your friend, and make a juſt eſtimate of both; then boldly, without any dread of conſequences, decide like a rational being; remembering *him* who hath ſaid, "he that "forſaketh not father and mother, wiſe "and children, houſes and land, yea, "and all that he hath, for my ſake and "the goſpel's, is not worthy of me."

MAJOR.

It muſt be ſo. This breaſt can never be the reſidence of happineſs more, if the

the ſacrifice be not made; and the ſooner the better. The hour is juſt at hand that we appointed to meet. I muſt leave you for a while; his impatience will not ſuffer him to wait an inſtant for me. Shall I then beg of my friend to remember me at the throne of grace, during the ſhort interval I may be gone; for the moment I have delivered my mind, I ſhall hurry back with all poſſible expedition: therefore let me entreat you not to leave your room till I return; and remember the promiſe made in your laſt letter to furniſh me with new evidences, which you ſaid I could not poſſibly underſtand before. This myſtery I muſt have cleared up.

CAPTAIN.

I remember it. Go; and in the ſtrength of that God whoſe cauſe you have

have espoused may you obtain a complete victory.

— — — — — — — —

CAPTAIN.

Soon returned indeed! why you have not been gone above half an hour.

MAJOR.

'Tis done! my soul now enjoys a liberty it never experienced before. The old gentleman, as I expected, was impatiently waiting for me; and the instant I entered the room, asked me, with a smile, if he might call me Colonel? I told him no; that I had deliberately considered the matter between us, and was fully and resolutely determined to maintain the sentiments I had

had lately adopted; and to follow that line of conduct he disapproved to my latest breath: that therefore all future efforts to persuade me to the contrary would, I trust, prove ineffectual. This, as you may easily conceive, threw him into a violent passion, that carried him beyond all moderate bounds; and led him to say many cutting things, which, on any other occasion, I should not have so easily put up with: he exclaimed bitterly against my ingratitude; swore he no longer regarded me as a friend, but hated me as an enemy; and would, if possible, for ever prevent my rising in the army. All attempts to bring him to a calm reasoning on the subject were in vain; with much difficulty I just gained his attention a few minutes, while I assured him that, however he might act towards me for the future, I should never forget what a valuable

valuable friend he had been to me; and ſhould, therefore, retain the higheſt eſteem and regard for him: that if the ſacrifice he aſked had affected my life and property, both had been at his ſervice; but my ſoul I valued at a higher rate, than to put it in the ſcale with a lieutenant-colonel's commiſſion. He looked at me for ſome time with an air of contemptuous pity; then huffiſhly wiſhed me a good afternoon. I inſtantly returned the compliment, and hurried here, a very different perſon from what I was half an hour ago. The enormous load is gone from my mind; a ſweet calm has ſucceeded the dreadful ſtorm that thundered within, and my happy ſoul, at perfect peace, enjoys a tranquillity it never taſted before: and now I ſhall claim the fulfilment of your promiſe: we have nothing, I hope, to interrupt us all the evening.

CAPTAIN.

Now, my friend, let the ſhout of triumph be heard in our camp! You have valiantly fought one of the hotteſt battles you ever were engaged in; but let God alone have all the honour, for to him alone it is due.

MAJOR.

Indeed, with the greateſt propriety and true ſelf-conviction, I can now ſing with the Pſalmiſt, and our brave King Henry on the field of Agincourt, "Not "unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but " to thy name give glory." For when I look but a very little way back, and call to remembrance the principles from which I acted; the falſe ideas I conceived of God and true religion; the

erroneous

erroneous notions I had formed of his professing people; with the general bent of my affections in the indulgence of every lust; I stand astonished at my present self, so great, so universal is the change—a change which I am fully confident no human power could ever have effected.

CAPTAIN.

It is with peculiar pleasure, I find there will be but very little trouble for me to collect evidences for your further satisfaction; your own experience, as we go along, will furnish us with as many as we shall be able to discuss this evening. What a blaze of light, for example, must the present state of your mind throw upon the sacred scriptures? how clearly, and very particularly throughout both the Old

and New Teſtament, do they foretel and deſcribe the manner and effects of this total renovation of heart? The great Author of our ſalvation, his prophets, apoſtles, and evangeliſts, all poſitively inſiſt upon the abſolute neceſſity of being thus regenerated, or born again. It is called a new creation, a new man, a new birth unto righteouſneſs; and it is ſaid concerning it, that "old things are paſſed away, and that all things are become new."

MAJOR.

This is emphatically the ſtate of my ſoul at preſent: it ſeems as juſt entering into a new world, or commencing a new ſtate of exiſtence; ſo vaſtly different is its conception of things now from what it was a few weeks ago: and the analogy between its preſent feelings and the

the word of God is ſo very ſtriking, that it produces a heart-felt ſatisfaction which I can by no means deſcribe; though its effects, I can eaſily perceive, are very different from thoſe produced by the hiſtorical, ſcriptural, and ocular proofs mentioned in our former conferences. The one ſilenced all objections that the prejudiced mind had to allege againſt the divinity of the ſacred ſcriptures; clearly pointing to the ſide where reaſon ſhould lean; yet left no laſting impreſſion, or deep conviction, ſufficient to touch the heart, or bias the conduct. But this brings a feeling, enlightening, and operative perſuaſion of the truth to the ſoul; removes every impediment, doubt, and ſcruple; making faith reſt, with the ſweeteſt confidence, on their divine authority.

CAPTAIN.

But ſix weeks ago, you experienced nothing of all this; therefore, without any of my aid, you have fully unravelled the myſtery that juſt now ſeemed ſo much to puzzle you: being well convinced, I hope, by this time, that an unconverted man could not poſſibly reap the advantages from this evidence that you do. He might, indeed, with ſurpriſe, behold a great alteration for the better in your conduct, ſufficient to convince him there muſt be ſome ſecret and powerful cauſe that occaſioned it; but he could never experimentally enter into the true ſpirit of your feelings, becauſe, agreeably to the ſacred oracles, and univerſal experience, "no man knoweth "the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit "of man that is in him;" unleſs by the

Spirit

Spirit of God the ſame happy effect were wrought on his mind, as I truſt has been wrought on yours. And from hence you may ſee the vaſt ſuperiority of this teaching to all human learning; and the great condeſcenſion, wiſdom, and goodneſs of the Almighty, in providing this method to inſtruct the poor and unlearned among mankind; who frequently riſe high in heavenly wiſdom, while thoſe who are accounted wiſe in this world, reaſon, and write, and talk, like mere idiots on divine things.

MAJOR.

There is another very ſingular circumſtance in my preſent experience; which affords me no ſmall degree of pleaſure and delight, as I truſt it may be attributed to the ſame happy cauſe. The ſcriptures (which my ſoul now

cordially embraces as the word of God) have been the ſubject of my meditation during theſe laſt four weeks, more than they have been for as many years of my paſt life; but they no longer appear to be the ſame. The Bible is really become a new book to me, full of important truths I never once perceived before: every ſentence, almoſt every word, has ſuch a full and precious meaning in it, ſo exactly ſuited to the numberleſs wants and deſires of my enraptured ſoul, that I am forced to ſtop almoſt at every verſe, and cry out, in an ecſtaſy of joy, "Is it poſſible "I could have read this heart-raviſh-"ing truth before, and receive no im-"preſſion from it? it never could be! "Where were my eyes, that I did not "ſee it? whither was my careleſs ſoul "wandering, that it did not feel its "force, and taſte but a drop of that

"bliſs

"bliss it now so copiously enjoys?" O my friend! I cannot describe to you the delightful moments I have experienced while thus sweetly exercised. It is with the greatest truth and propriety I adopt the language of the prophet, and say, "I found they word "and did eat it;" or repeat with the sweet singer of Israel, "It is sweeter "to me than honey or the honey-"comb: more to be desired than "gold, yea, than much fine gold."

CAPTAIN.

While you enjoy such blessed repasts as these, I am sure there is no need for me, or any body else, to tell you who was the author of the sacred scriptures: that Spirit who indited them, now reveals it to your soul, in a manner too spiritual for human description; but much

much more convincingly than all the arguments of men or angels could ever do. By this effectual teaching the most ignorant are made truly wiſe, while the carnal man, with all his natural and acquired abilities, can have no conception of it: he may read his Bible with the greateſt attention every day of his life, and it is his duty ſo to do; he may conſult the beſt commentators upon it, and be ſatisfied with their elucidation of ſome obſcure paſſages; but till it's ſacred author open the eyes of his mind to diſcern the grand purport of its contents; to perceive his perſonal intereſt in the precious truths there revealed, and to feel their divine influence upon his ſoul; he may read till his eyes grow dim with age, and never be a whit or jot the wiſer. For let men cavil as much as they pleaſe, this Bible-truth will ſtand good to the end of time againſt all

who oppose it. "The things of God "knoweth no man, but the Spirit of "God, and he to whom the Spirit "shall reveal them. Therefore his "people receive not the spirit of the "world, but the Spirit which is of "God, that they may know the things "that are freely given them of God: "but the natural man receiveth them "not, for they are foolishness unto "him; neither can he know them, "because they are spiritually discerned." Being now experimentally convinced of this divine truth, you will no longer be stumbled, when you hear our blaspheming officers quoting detached portions of scripture, seemingly irreconcileable; and crying out, Nicodemus-like, "how can these things be?" The cause of such blind unreasonable conduct will be sufficiently evident to you, though it may be entirely hid

from

from them; and this will naturally lead you to avoid all paſſion, rancour, and unbecoming expreſſions, in your future contentions with them on religious ſubjects. A moderate loving ſpirit may engage them to make ſome enquiries after the truths of the goſpel; but a bitter abuſive ſpirit will only ſerve to increaſe their prejudice againſt them. But notwithſtanding all the moderation and meekneſs you may be enabled to exerciſe among them, you muſt not expect always to meet with the ſame gentle treatment. Contentions and perſecutions will moſt certainly fall to your ſhare; they are part of the legacy your dear Redeemer bequeathed to his faithful followers, and marks by which his children are diſtinguiſhed: therefore they will afford you another, though painful, proof of the divinity of the ſacred Scriptures. You may, perhaps,

remember

remember I urged this argument before, and foretold the treatment you would meet with from your best friend the General: you now perceive I went upon sure ground, and that there was little danger of my proving a false prophet. But however they may revile and persecute you, cast out your name as evil, and separate you from their company; grace will teach you a better lesson, to pity and pray for them, and withal to be humble, that unto you it is given to know the things of the kingdom of God, while unto them it is not yet given. "The secret of the Lord is "now with you, and he has shown "you his covenant." A life of gratitude and praise, I trust, will be the result of such an unmerited blessing.

MAJOR.

MAJOR.

Ah! this is juſt what I moſt earneſtly long and pant after: my happy heart ſeems ſenſible but of one only want, more love and gratitude to that precious Chriſt who undertook, and accompliſhed the great work of my ſalvation; and deigned, in infinite mercy, to diſtinguiſh the moſt unworthy of all his creatures to be a partaker of his free, rich, and ſovereign grace. O that he would liſten to the fervent breathings of my ſoul, and enable me to live to his glory, in ſome degree ſuitable to the great mercies I have received!

CAPTAIN.

There is not a doubt but he will grant your requeſt; for he is well known in

the Chriſtian world under this bleſſed character—"the hearer and anſwerer of "prayer." To the unſpeakable comfort of his people in all ages, he has never once failed to make this title good; and, perhaps, there is not one argument among all that has been advanced to prove the authenticity of divine revelation, that is ſo evident, ſo heart-cheering, and ſweetly convincing to the converted ſoul as this. I can ſpeak from long and happy experience on this delightful ſubject; which has proved an inexhauſtible ſource of conſolation to my ſoul, in every intricate and perplexing path through which it hath pleaſed God to lead me: for, to the honour of his great name, with the greateſt humility I can confidently ſay, he has a thouſand, and a thouſand times heard and anſwered the cry of his unworthy duſt, when no human help was near to ſuccour.

cour. O how often, in a time of imminent danger, when all has been darkneſs around, not the leaſt hope of deliverance from any quarter; the trembling heart juſt ready to ſink under its fears, and give up all for loſt, have I fled to a throne of grace, and found inſtant relief? Some unforeſeen, unexpected, nay, I will be bold to ſay, ſometimes miraculous diſplay of divine Providence has ſuddenly intervened, and conſtrained me to cry out in an ecſtaſy of holy joy, "The Lord he is the God, "the Lord he is the God." Theſe are precious moments, Major, which a ſtranger intermeddleth not with; happy earneſts to the raviſhed ſoul of the certainty of its intereſt in a Saviour's love: pearls which by no means we ſhould caſt before ſwine; leaſt, being totally ignorant of their immenſe value, they ſhould only trample them under foot;

and,

and, perhaps, turn again and rend you with the opprobrious epithets of poor deluded enthusiast, or lying, canting hypocrite. But while the tongue of ignorance rails, the hand of reason will set her seal to the truth of plain matters of fact; for what my eyes have repeatedly beheld, what my hands have handled, and my heart a thousand times felt, of these things, I must necessarily believe to be true; and may fairly conclude, from the sacred oracles, that they were special marks of God's peculiar favour, or they never would have been so remarkably and so seasonably answered. I well know that the men of the world (particularly those we are most conversant with) are obstinately prejudiced against all this, and wholly object to the Christian's life of faith, because they cannot possibly comprehend it; but neither obstinate pre-

judice, nor blind ignorance, can leſſen, much leſs overthrow, a well atteſted fact. Not all the men upon earth, nor all the devils in hell, will ever perſuade me to the contrary of what I have thus ſeen, felt, and enjoyed. True religion is a very different thing from what thouſands and millions in the world take it to be: it is not a vague notion that floats in the brain; an incitement of natural conſcience to a ceremonious attendance on the outward ordinances of divine worſhip; nor an empty ſentiment wavering in the mind that has no influence on the conduct; but a holy, lively, and active principle of divine love, rooted in the heart by the Spirit of God; felt and experienced in its powerful operations by the true believer, all his journey through time. The man that is not convinced of the truth of his religion by what he has felt in his own ſoul,

has no true religion at all. And he that never received any gracious anſwers to prayer, never yet prayed aright, nor to any ſaving purpoſe.

MAJOR.

I truſt I can ſay, with ſome degree of confidence, the Lord in ſeveral inſtances has granted my requeſts; but there are many more which I have ſpread before him, to which I have received no anſwer.

CAPTAIN.

You muſt patiently wait the Lord's time and way for this; which, in the iſſue, you will always find to be the moſt ſeaſonable. I can recollect circumſtances in my life which occaſioned many fervent petitions to be laid before him;

but becauſe they were not immediately granted, my unwatchful heart has forgotten them for years, and never once after entertained a thought about them: but in this reſpect, as in all others, God's thoughts were not like mine. He did not forget my prayer; but in his own time ſent ſuch a full, complete, diſtinct, and literal anſwer, as did not leave the ſmalleſt room to doubt of its being in conſequence of the requeſt I had formerly ſpread before him. Nay, I have experienced on this head what, perhaps, you will think a flat contradiction; when my requeſts have been poſitively denied, that then they have been moſt completely granted.

MAJOR.

This is a paradox indeed. I have heard there are many in the Chriſtian's

experience, and have already been acquainted with a few of them; but this seems rather beyond my reach: however, it helps with others to confirm me in this sentiment, that a truly religious man enjoys a vast advantage over the rest of the world, in having such a gracious God to apply to, whom he can address under the endearing title of a Father; and, on any sudden emergency, difficulty or distress, be confident of obtaining, through a dear Redeemer, all that he can possibly stand in need of. Were there nothing else to recommend true religion, either with respect to its high importance or divine authenticity, this alone would be fully sufficient.

CAPTAIN.

As you advance in the path of practical holiness, the road that leads to your

eternal home, you will every day find fresh cause to retain this sentiment. And with respect to the paradox I mentioned, and many others of the same nature, I am confident at another opportunity I shall be able to explain them to your full satisfaction, if you do not discover them before in your own experience: but, for the present, I am persuaded you will agree with me, that it will be most prudent for us to separate. You know I have not waited on the Commanding Officer since my return; and you, it is most probable, about this time will be wanted on the parade. Christian soldiers cannot be too careful to maintain the honour of their master's cause, in the diligent execution of their duty, in that station where his providence has placed them. You may now expect the General will watch your proceedings very narrowly, and I am sure you will wish to convince

him,

him, by your future conduct, that religion has not made you a less diligent officer than you were before. We shall, I trust, through rich mercy, enjoy many sweet moments this winter, in communicating our experience of divine things to each other: then it will be delightful work for me to tell, as David did, what the Lord hath done for my soul, and to hear how he is carrying on the gracious work he hath begun in yours. In such sweet employ as this, I have had many ravishing fortastes of heaven's unutterable joy, which far more than compensated for all the trials I have met with on the Christian road. Our blessed Sovereign pays his soldiers well for all the battles he enables them to fight in his cause.

MAJOR.

When I reflect on the ſecret pleaſure I have already felt, and the great profit I know my ſoul has reaped from our paſt conferences, I cannot forbear looking forward with a degree of high expectation on thoſe we may yet through grace enjoy: therefore I ſhall watch every opportunity to make them as frequent as poſſible; well perſuaded our ſouls are now too near a kin, and their mutual intereſts too cloſely connected, to be any long time ſeparated from each other: ſovereign love has formed the happy union, that muſt laſt throughout the boundleſs ages of eternity.

THE END.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

BOOKS *printed for, and sold by* J. MATHEWS, No. 18, *Strand.*

DIVINITY.

1. A Key to open Scripture Metaphors, in four Books, by Mr. Benjamin Keach; recommended by several eminent Divines of the present Day. Price 1l. 11s. 6d.

2. HORÆ SOLITARIÆ, or Essays upon the essential Divinity, and proper personality of the SON and HOLY SPIRIT, considered in connection with their respective Offices in human Redemption, and with the Faith and Practice of the Christian Life; to which are added brief Accounts of the Heresies which have arisen upon the Divinity of these PERSONS; and also an historical ESSAY upon the DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, both as it appeared before the Christian Æra, and as it hath been promulgated and corrupted in various Parts of the World, in 2 vols. 8vo. the 2d Edit. with large Additions. Price in boards, 12s. or 14s. bound.—*N. B.* The above Work is earnestly recommended by the Rev. Mr. Romaine.

3. Fifty-two Sermons on the Baptismal Covenant, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and other important Subjects of Practical Religion, in 2 vols. 8vo. by Samuel Walker, of Truro, A. B. Price in boards 10s. or 12s. bound.

4. The Christian, being a Course of practical Sermons, by Samuel Walker of Truro, A. B. Price 2s. 6d.

5. A Compendious View of Natural and revealed Religion, in 7 Books, interspersed with serious Addresses to the Consciences of the Readers, in 1 vol. large 8vo. by John Brown. Price in boards, 5s.

6. A Dictionary of the HOLY BIBLE by John Brown in 2 large vols. 8vo. Price in boards 12s. or bound 14s.

N. B. A new Edition of Brown's ſelf interpreting BIBLE is going to preſs with all convenient ſpeed.

7. A brief Concordance to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, by John Brown. Price bound 2s. 6d.

8. A brief View of the Figures and Explication of the Metaphors contained in the Scriptures, by John Brown. Price bound 3s.

9. The Chriſtian Journal, by John Brown. Price bound 3s.

10. The Chriſtian, the Student, and Paſtor, exemplified in the Lives of ſeveral eminent Divines, by John Brown. Price bound 2s. 6d.

11. Select Remains of the late Rev. Mr. John Brown, late of Haddington, containing Memoirs of his Life, ſome Letters and Tracts, with his dying Addreſſes to his Children, and Advice to his Congregation, with an Account of his Dying Experience.

12. Beart's Vindication of the Eternal Law and Everlaſting Goſpel. The 3d Edit. with a Preface and Notes, by C. Decoetlogon. Price ſewed 2s 6d. or bound 3s.

13. Prayers and Offices of Devotion for Families and for particular Perſons upon moſt Occaſions, by Benjamin Jenks, the 21ſt Edit. Price bound 3s.

14. Speedily will be publiſhed by the Author of the Chriſtian Officer's Panoply, Price 1s, Who fares beſt, the Chriſtian, or the Man of the World, or the Superior Advantages of a life of real Piety to a life of Faſhionable Diſſipation.

15. A Companion for the Chriſtian, in his Field and Garden. Price bound 2s. ſewed 1s. 6d.

16. The Christian Remembrancer, or short Reflections upon the Faith, Life and Conduct of a real Christian; the 2d Edit. on a larger Type. Price 2s. sewed; bound 2s. 6d. The above two by the Author of Horæ Solitariæ.

17. The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to come, by John Bunyan, complete in 2 Parts, a new Edition, divided into Chapters, to which are added explanatory Notes. Together with the Life of the Author, containing many new and curious Particulars, by G. Burder, Minister of the Gospel at Coventry, adorned with ten neat Copper Plates Price bound 3s. 6d.

18. Deep Things of God; or Milk and Strong Meat: containing spiritual and experimental Remarks and Meditations, suited to the Cases of Babes, Young Men, and Fathers in Christ: particularly to such as are under Trials and Temptations, and who feel the Plague of their own Hearts. Price in boards 2s. bound 2s. 6d.

19. A new Edit. of the Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners, explained, illustrated, and proved in a Sermon, upon Rom. iii. 19. by Jonathan Edwards, A. M. late President of New Jersey College, New England; revised and corrected by C. De Coetlogon, A. M. Price 6d.

20. A Present for Your Neighbour, or the Right Knowledge of God, and of Ourselves opened, in a plain, practical, and experimental manner, by Sir Richard Hill, Bart. The eighth Edition. Price 3d. or one Guinea per Hunderd.

21. Scripture Characters, or a practical improvement of the principle Histories in the Old and New Testament. By T. Robinson, of Leicester. Price in boards 3s.

22. A Short Catechism, containing the Fundamental Principles of Christianity, originally published in the German Tongue, and now translated into English, with a Preface, by Sir Richard Hill, Bart. Price 6d. stitched, and 9d. bound, or 2l. 2s. per Hundred stitched.

23. A Sketch of the distinguishing Graces of the Christian Character, as originating from the Holy Spirit's secret, yet efficacious Influence upon the Minds of Men: with a rational Inquiry into the Reality and Nature of Divine Influences. By Philip Gurdon, M. A. Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. Price 2s. 6d. sewed.

24. A new Edition enlarged, of a Lash at Enthusiasm: in a Dialogue between two Ladies, chiefly relative to a certain popular Preacher, founded on real Facts. To which is now first added, a Dialogue between four very good old Ladies over a comfortable Game at Quadrille. Price 6d.

25. A short and candid Address to the Religious Society called Baptists in general, and to those of that Denomination at Reading, Berks, in particular. Price 6d.

26. Christian Memoirs, or a Review of the present State of Religion in England, in the Form of a new Pilgrimage to the Heavenly Jerusalem: containing, by Way of allegorical Narrative, a great Variety of Dialogues on the most interesting Subjects, and Adventures of eminently religious Persons, by W. Shrubsole. 2d Edit. enlarged. Price sewed 5s.

27. Self disclaimed, and Christ exalted; a sermon preached at Philadelphia, before the Synod of New York, by David Bostwick, A. M. Price 6d.

28. A fair and rational Vindication of the Rights of Infants to the Ordinance of Baptism, by David Bostock, A. M. A new Edition. Price 4d.

29. A Treatise on the Extent of the Death of Christ, being an Abridgment of Dr. Owen's Death of Death in the Death of Christ, with a recommendatory Preface, by the Rev. Mr. Charles De Coetlogon, A. M. Price 1s.

30. Some Account of the State of Religion in London, in four Letters to a Friend in the Country, in which are drawn many striking Characters of real and nominal Christians, shewing the happy Issue of the former, and the awful Declensions and Falls of the latter. Designed to shew the Professors of the Gospel the Greatness of their Privileges, and to excite them to a correspondent Conduct, as the only means of securing the Continuance of them. 1s 6d.

31. Murrey's Closet Devotions, bound 2s. 6d.

32. A Treatise on Assurance, by the late Rev. Thomas Brooks. A new Edition. Price 1s. 6d. sewed, 2s. bound; and on fine Paper, 2s. sewed, 2s. 6d. bound.

33. Boston's Crook in the Lot, bound 1s.

34. Jesus Triumphant in the Conversion and Death of Anna Catharine Merks, executed at Rotterdam in Holland, with a brief Account of her Life. Price 9d.

35. A Warning to English Protestants, on Occasion of the present more than ordinary Growth of Popery: containing many valuable Particulars, and adorned with a Frontispiece, representing the burning of Catharine Cawches and her two Daughters. Price 6d.

36. The Way to be Happy io a Miserable World. The fourth Edit. Price 2d. or 14s. per Hundred.

37. The Christian Dignity, or the humblest Believer the greatest Man. Price 3d. or 1l. 1s. per Hundred.

38. A Christmas Box for the Heart. Price 2d. or 14s. per Hundred.

39. A Serious Address to the truly religious of all Denominations, upon the Temper and Conduct of Professors, in Times of Public Disturbance. Price 3d. or 1l. 1s. per Hundred.

40. The Conversion and religious Experience of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, of New England. Price 2d. or 14s. per Hundred.

41. CHRIST IS ALL. With a Preface, by Dr. Peckwell. Neatly sewed in marble Paper, 4d. or 1l. 7s. per Hundred; and 6d. bound in Sheep, or 2l. 2s. per Hundred.

42. A Memoir of some principal Circumstances in the Life and Death of the Reverend and learned Augustus Toplady, B. A. late Vicar of Broad Hembury, Devon: to which is added, written by himself, The Dying Believer's Address to his Soul, and his own last Will and Testament. The 3d Edition. Price 6d.

43. An Elegiac Poem in Blank Verse, on the Death of the Rev. Mr. A. M. Toplady, A. B. By John Fellows, Author of the History of the Bible in Verse, &c. Price 6d.

44. An Elegy on the Death of the Rev. Mr. A. M. Toplady, A. B. By T. W. Price 6d.

BOOKS printed for J. MATHEWS.

The following eighteen Pieces, written by the Rev. Augustus Toplady, B. A.

1. THE second Edition, enlarged, of the Church of England, vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism. Price 1s. 6d.

2. The second Edition, improved, of the Doctrine of absolute Predestination, stated and asserted. Price 2s.

3. A Letter to Mr. John Westley. Price 6d.

4. A third Edition of a Caveat against unsound Doctrines, a Sermon. Price 1s.

5. The second Edition of Jesus seen of Angels; and God's Mindfulness of Man: Three Sermons, preached at Broad Hembury, Devon, Dec. 25, 1770. Price 1s. 6d.

6. Free Thoughts on the Application to Parliament for the Abolition of Ecclesiastical Subscriptions. Price 6d.

7. More Work for John Westley. Price 1. 6d.

8. Clerical Subscription no Grievance, a Sermon. Price 6d.

9. Historic Proof, 2 Vols. 8vo. in Boards. Price 10s.

10. Free-will and Merit fairly examined, or Men not their own Saviours. Price 6d.

11. Good News from Heaven, or, The Gospel a joyful sound. Price 6d.

12. The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity. Price in Boards 3s.

13. Joy in Heaven, and the Creed of Devils, two Sermons. 1s.

14. Moral and Political Moderation, a Fast Sermon. Price 6d.

15. Collection of Hymns for Public and Private Worship, 1776. Price bound 3s.

16. A fifth Edition of his Dying Avowal. Price 1d.

17. His Posthumous Works, containing, 1st. Excellent Passages selected from the Writings of Eminent Divines, &c. 2. Short Memorials of God's gracious Dealings with his Soul. 3. Collections of Letters. 4. A Short History of England. Price in Boards 5s.

18. The Gleanings of the Vintage, being several Essays and Meditations selected from the Manuscripts of Periodical Papers, written by Augustus Montague Toplady, with a Preface by Dr. Peckwell. Price 1s.

, Where may be had, Books in all the Sciences and Branches of Polite Literature, and particularly those of evangelical and experimental Divinity, both new, and second-hand.

††† Bibles, and Common Prayers of all Kinds and Sizes: Likewise a great Variety of Hymn Books, by Mess. Whitefield, Madan, Peckwell, Newton, Dr. Watts, *&c.* in different neat and elegant Bindings; with Stationary Wares of all Sorts; Ledgers and Accompt Book, *&c. &c.*

§§§ Books neatly Bound—Money for Libraries or Parcels of Books.

N. B. Country Booksellers, Schoolmasters and Shopkeepers, served with Books and Stationaries, Wholsesale, on the lowest Terms, and with punctuality.